Rashi on Deuteronomy
רש"י על דברים
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Rashi on Deuteronomy

Chapter 1

Verse 1

אלה הדברים THESE ARE THE WORDS — Because these are words of reproof and he is enumerating here all the places where they provoked God to anger, therefore he suppresses all mention of the matters in which they sinned and refers to them only by a mere allusion contained in the names of these places out of regard for Israel (cf. Sifrei Devarim 1:1; Onkelos and Targum Jonathan).
אל כל ישראל [THE WORDS WHICH HE SPAKE] TO ALL ISRAEL — If he had reproved only some of them, those who were then in the street (i.e. those who were absent) might have said, "You heard from the son of Amram, and did not answer a single word regarding this and that; had we been there, we would have given him an answer!". On this account he assembled all of them, and said to them, "See, you are all here: he who has anything to say in reply, let him reply!" (Sifrei Devarim 1:6-7).
במדבר IN THE WILDERNESS — They, however,were not then in the wilderness, but in the plains of Moab (cf. Numbers 36:13 and further on verse 5): What, therefore, is the meaning of במדבר? It does not mean "in the wilderness", but the meaning is: he reproved them on account of that wherein they had provoked Him to anger in the wilderness — that they said, (Exodus 16:3) "Would that we had died [by the hand of the Lord]" (cf. Sifrei Devarim 1:11).
בערבה IN THE PLAIN — i.e. he reproved them regarding the plain: that they had sinned through Baal Peor at Shittim in the plains of Moab (cf. Sifrei Devarim 1:13)
מול סוף OVER AGAINST SUPH — i.e. he reproved them regarding that in which they had shown themselves rebellious at the Red Sea (סוף): viz., on their arrival at the Red Sea — that they said, (Exodus 14:11) "Is it because there are no graves in Egypt [that thou hast brought us to die in the wilderness?]"; and similarly when they left the midst of the Sea, as it is said, (Psalms 106:7) "They murmured because of the Sea, at the Red Sea", as it is related in Treatise Arakhin 15a (cf. Rashi on Numbers 14:22 and Sifrei 1:14).
בין פארן ובין תפל ולבן BETWEEN PARAN, AND TOPHEL AND LABAN — R. Jochanan said: We have gone through the whole Bible and we have found no place the name of which is Tophel or Laban! But the meaning is that he reproved them because of the calumnious statements (טפלו) they had made regarding the Manna which was white (לבן) in colour — that they said, (Numbers 21:5) "And our soul loathes this light bread"; and because of what they had done in the wilderness of Paran through the spies.
וחצרת AND HAZEROTH — i.e. regarding what they had done there at the insurrection of Korah. — Another explanation: He said to them, "You ought to have taken a lesson from what I did to Miriam at Hazeroth because of

the slander she uttered, and yet you even after that spoke against the Omnipresent (Sifrei Devarim 1:15).
ודי זהב AND DI ZAHAB (the name is taken in the sense of "sufficiency of gold") — He reproved them on account of the golden calf which they had made in consequence of the abundance of gold which they had, as it is said, (Hosea 2:10) "And silver did I give them in abundance and gold: they, however, made it into a Baal" (cf. Berakhot 32a; Sifrei Devarim 1:18).

Verse 2

אחד עשר יום מחרב ELEVEN DAYS JOURNEY FROM HOREB — Moses said to them: "See what you brought about! There is no route from Horeb to Kadesh-Barnea as short as the way through Mount Seir, and even that is a journey of eleven days. You, however, traversed it in three days!" — for you see that they journeyed from Horeb on the twentieth of Eyar, as it is said, (Numbers 10:11—12) "And it came to pass in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth of the month, [the cloud went up and the children of Israel journeyed out of the desert of Sinai" (which is Horeb)] and on the twenty-ninth of Sivan they sent out the spies from Kadesh Barnea, (an interval of 40 days; cf. Taanit 29a); deduct from these the thirty days they spent at Kibroth Hataavah, where they ate the flesh "a month of days", and seven days they spent at Hazeroth for Miriam to be shut up there as a leper, it follows that in three days they traversed all that way. — To such an extent did the Shechinah exert itself to hasten your coming to the land of Canaan, but because you became degenerate, He made you travel round about Mount Seir for forty years (Sifrei Devarim 2:2).

Verse 3

ויהי בארבעים שנה בעשתי עשר חדש באחד לחדש AND IT CAME TO PASS IN THE FORTIETH YEAR, IN THE ELEVENTH MONTH, ON THE FIRST OF THE MONTH, [MOSES SPAKE] — This tells us that he reproved them only shortly before his death (Jewish tradition holds that Moses died on the seventh day of the twelfth month; cf. Megillah 13b). From whom did he learn this? From Jacob, who reproved his sons only shortly before his death. He said, "Reuben, my son, I will tell you why I have not reproved you for your unfitial conduct during all these years: it was in order that you should not leave me and go and join Esau, my wicked brother". — And on account of four things one should not reprove a person except shortly before one's death: that one should not reprove him and again have to reprove him; and that his fellow whom he reproves should not, when he afterwards happens to see him, feel ashamed before him, etc.; as it is set forth in Siphre. And similarly, Joshua reproved Israel only shortly before his death (cf. Joshua 24:1—29), and so, too, Samuel, as it is said, (I Samuel 12:3) "Behold, testify against me", and so, also, David reproved his son Solomon only shortly before his death (cf. 1 Kings 2:1—9).

Verse 4

אחרי הכתו AFTER HE HAD SMITTEN [SIHON] — Moses said: If I reprove them before they enter at least a part of the land, they will say, "What claim has this man upon us? What good has he ever conferred upon us? He only comes (his purpose is only) to vex us and to discover some pretext for leaving us in the wilderness, for he really has not the power to bring us into the land" On this account he waited until he had defeated Sihon and Og before them and had given them possession of their land — and only after that did he reprove them (Sifrei Devarim 3:2).
סיחן … אשר יושב בחשבון [AFTER HE HAD SMITTEN] SIHON … WHO DWELT IN HESHBON — Even if Sihon himself had not been difficult to defeat, but had

resided at Heshbon, he would have been difficult to defeat, because the city was a difficult one to capture: and if it had been a matter of some other city, but Sihon had resided in it, it would have been difficult to capture, because its king, at least, would have been difficult to defeat. How much more was this so now when the king was difficult to defeat and the land difficult to capture (Sifrei Devarim 3:3; cf. Rashi on Numbers 21:23).
אשר יושב בעשתרת [AND OG] WHO DWELT AT ASHTAROTH — here, too, the king was difficult to defeat and the city difficult to capture (Sifrei Devarim 3:4).
עשתרת — This is an expression denoting rocks and anything hard, just as (Genesis 14:5) "Ashtaroth Karnaim", (i.e. the hard rocks of Karnaim) (Sifrei Devarim 3:5)). And indeed this Ashtaroth is identical with Ashtaroth Karnaim where the Rephaim (the giants) were, whom Amraphel smote, as it is said, (Genesis 14:5) "And they smote the Rephaim in Ashtaroth Karnaim". Og, alone, escaped of them, and that is the meaning of what is stated, (Genesis 14:13; cf. Rashi) "And the one who escaped (הפליט) came", for it further states, (Deuteronomy 3:11) "For only Og, king of Bashan, remained of the remnant of the Rephaim",
באדרעי IN EDREI — the name of the royal city.

Verse 5

הואיל means HE BEGAN, just as (Genesis 18:27) "Behold, now I have begun (הואלתי)" (cf. Sifrei Devarim 4:1).
באר את התורה [MOSES BEGAN] TO EXPLAIN THIS LAW — in the seventy languages of the ancient world did he explain it to them (Midrash Tanchuma, Devarim 2; Genesis Rabbah 49; cf. Sotah 32a and Rashi on Deuteronomy 27:8).

Verse 6

רב לכם שבת — Explain this according to its plain sense: YE HAVE DWELT LONG ENOUGH [IN THIS MOUNT]. — But there is an Agadic explanation: He has given you much distinction and reward for your having dwelt in this mount: you made the Tabernacle, the candlestick and the other sacred articles, you received the Torah, you appointed a Sanhedrin for yourselves, captains over thousands and captains over hundreds (cf. Sifrei Devarim 5:2).

Verse 7

פנו וסעו לכם TURN YOU AND JOURNEY — this was the journey to Arad and Hormah mentioned in Numbers 21:1—3.
ובאו הר האמרי — Understand this according to what it literally implies.
ואל כל שכניו AND TO ALL ITS NEIGHBOURING PLACES — Ammon, and Moab, and Mount Seir.
בערבה IN THE PLAIN — this is the plain of the forest.
בהר IN THE MOUNTAIN — this is the King's mountain.
ובשפלה AND IN THE LOW LAND — this is the low land of the south country.
ובנגב ובחוף הים AND IN THE SOUTH COUNTRY AND BY THE SEA COAST — Ashkelon and Gaza and Caesarea, etc., all as is stated in Sifrei Devarim 6:1.
עד הנהר הגדל TO THE GREAT RIVER [THE RIVER EUPHRATES] — Because it is mentioned in connection with the Land of Israel, it terms it "great". A popular proverb says: A king's servant is a king, attach yourself to a captain and people will bow down to you; go near to an anointed (a distinguished) person and you become anointed (distinguished) yourself (cf. Rashi on Shevuot 47b and Genesis 15:18).

Verse 8

ראה נתתי SEE, I HAVE GIVEN [THE LAND BEFORE THEE] — With your own eyes do you see this: I do not tell you this by conjecture or hearsay (Sifrei Devarim 7).
באו ורשו GO IN AND POSSESS [THE LAND] — There is no one who will contest the matter, and you will not need to wage war. Indeed, had they not sent the spies, but had trusted in God's promise, they would not have needed weapons of war (cf. Sifrei Devarim 7).
לאבתיכם [THE LAND WHICH THE LORD SWARE] UNTO YOUR FATHERS … [TO GIVE TO THEM] — Why does he further mention their names: to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob? But it is to suggest the following: The merit of Abraham would itself suffice, that of Isaac would itself suffice, that of Jacob would itself suffice, that I should give the land to you (cf. Sifrei Devarim 8:1; see also Rashi on Leviticus 26:42).

Verse 9

ואמר אלכם בעת ההוא לאמר AND I SPAKE UNTO YOU AT THAT TIME, SAYING — What is the force of לאמר, (lit., to say. i.e. being bidden to say)? Moses, in effect, said unto them: Not of myself do I tell you that I am not able to bear you, but by the bidding of the Holy One, blessed be He (Sifrei Devarim 9:1),
לא אוכל לבדי וגו׳ I AM NOT ABLE [TO BEAR YOU] ALONE — Is it possible that Moses was not able to judge Israel? The man who brought them forth from Egypt, and divided the sea for them, and made the Manna fall, and collected the quails, was not he able to judge them?! But thus did he say unto them, ה' אלהיכם הרבה אתכם THE LORD YOUR GOD HATH MADE YOU GREAT (הרבה) — He has made you superior to and has placed you higher than your judges, inasmuch as He takes the punishment off you and places it upon your judges if they could have prevented your wrongdoing and did not do so. Solomon made a similar statement (namely that the Jewish judge may easily make himself liable to punishment): "For who is able to judge this thy grievous people?" (1 Kings 3:9). Is it possible that he of whom it is said, (1 Kings 5:11) "He was wiser than all men", should say, "Who is able to judge"? But this did Solomon mean: The judges of this people are not like the judges of other peoples, for if one of the latter gives judgment and wrongly sentences a person to death by the sword, or to flagellation, or to strangulation, or wrests his justice and thus robs him of his due, it is regarded as of little importance (lit., there is nothing at all in that); I, however, if I unjustly sentence a person to pay even a sum of money, my life is required of me, as it is said, (Proverbs 22:23) "And He robs of their life those who rob them" (Sifrei Devarim 9:2; Sanhedrin 7a).

Verse 10

והנכם היום ככוכבי השמים AND, BEHOLD, YE ARE THIS DAY AS THE STARS OF THE HEAVEN — But were they that day as the stars of the heaven? Were they not, indeed, only sixty myriads? What, then, is the meaning of "And, behold, ye are this day (היום lit., the day)"? It means: Behold ye may be compared to the day (the sun), existing for ever just as the sun and the moon and the stars (cf. Sifrei Devarim 10:1).

Verse 11

יסף עליכם ככם אלף פעמים MAY HE ADD TO YOU A THOUSAND TIMES AS MANY MORE AS YE ARE — What is the force of saying further: ויברך אתכם כאשר דבר לכם AND MAY HE BLESS YOU EVEN AS HE HATH SPOKEN CONCERNING YOU? But the explanation is: They said to him, "Moses, you are setting a limit to our blessings (only a thousand times)! The Holy One, blessed be He, has already made a boundless promise to Abraham (Genesis 13:16) "… if one can

count [the dust of the earth, then can thy seed also be counted]"! Moses replied to them: This (a thousand times) is from me (it is my blessing); but may He bless you even as He hath spoken concerning you!" (Sifrei Devarim 11).

Verse 12

איכה אשא לבדי HOW CAN I MYSELF ALONE BEAR [YOUR CUMBRANCE, etc.]? — If I were to say, "I will do so in order to receive a reward for it", I may not do so. This is what I have already said to you: not of myself do I tell you that I am not able to bear you, but by the bidding of the Holy One, blessed be He (see Rashi v. 9).
טרחכם YOUR CUMBRANCE — Moses' use of this word regarding them teaches us that the Israelites were troublesome: if one of them perceived that his opponent in a law suit was about to be victor in the case he would say: I have witnesses to bring, further proof to adduce, I will add judges to you who are sitting (Sifrei Devarim 12:1).
ומשאכם YOUR BURDEN — this teaches that they were Epicorsim (that they treated the judges with scant respect): if Moses went forth early from his tent they said, "Why does the son of Amram leave so early? Perhaps he is not at ease at home?" If he left late, they said, "What do you think? He is sitting and devising evil schemes against you, and is plotting against you" (Sifrei Devarim 12:2).
וריבכם AND YOUR STRIFE — this teaches that they were always contentious (Sifrei Devarim 12:3).

Verse 13

הבו לכם means GET YOURSELVES READY for the matter (cf. Rashi on Genesis 11:3).
אנשים MEN — But would it enter your mind that he would take women? Why then does it state here men? It means that he should take righteous, desirable men (cf. Sifrei Devarim 13:2).
חכמים ונבונים WISE AND UNDERSTANDING [MEN] — i.e. men who can understand a matter out of (i.e. by comparison with) another matter. — This is what Arius asked R. Jose: what is the difference between wise men and understanding men? A wise man is like a rich money changer: when people bring him dinars to examine (to value) he examines them; and when they do not bring to him, he sits and does nothing (he does not go out to seek any). An understanding man, however, is like a merchant money changer: when they bring him coins to examine, he examines them; and when they do not bring to him, he goes about and brings of his own money (i.e. he himself buys coins) (cf. Sifrei Devarim 13:3).
וידעים לשבטיכם AND [MEN] KNOWN AMONGST YOUR TRIBES — i.e. men who are known to you. For if he were to come before me wrapped in his robe, "I" would not know who he is and of what tribe he is, and whether he is fitted for the office: but you know him for you have been brought up with him. On this account it states: known amongst your tribes (Sifrei Devarim 13:4).
בראשיכם [AND I WILL PLACE THEM] AT YOUR HEADS — as chiefs and persons honoured by you., i.e., that ye should pay them respect and reverence.
ואשמם — This word lacks the letter י (after the ש: our editions, however, have it): this teaches that Israel's transgressions (אשם) are placed upon the heads of their judges, because it is their duty to prevent them from sinning, and to direct them into the right path (Sifrei Devarim 13:6).

Verse 14

ותענו אתי וגו׳ AND YE ANSWERED ME, etc. — You at once decided the matter to your benefit. You should really have replied: Our teacher, Moses! From

whom is it more fitting to learn, from you or from your disciple? Is it not from you who have taken such pains about it? But I knew your thoughts: you said, "Many judges will now be appointed over us; if one of them does not happen to be an acquaintance of ours, we shall bring him a gift and he will show us favour (Sifrei Devarim 14).
לעשות TO DO — If I showed myself remiss, you said: act quickly (Sifrei Devarim 14).

Verse 15

ואקח את ראשי שבטיכם SO I TOOK THE HEADS OF YOUR TRIBES — I took them by fine words: Happy are you! Over whom are you about to be appointed? Over the sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — over the sons of people who are called God's brethren and friends, God's portion and inheritance and to whom is applied every other expression denoting affection (Sifrei Devarim 15:1; cf. Targum Jonathan).
אנשים חכמים וידעים [AND I TOOK] MEN, WISE AND KNOWN — but understanding men I could not find (Nedarim 20b). This, too, was one of the seven qualifications which Jethro mentioned to Moses, but he found only three: men, i.e. righteous men, wise and known (Sifrei Devarim 15:2).
ראשים עליכם [AND I MADE THEM] HEADS OVER YOU — i.e. that you should pay them respect — regard them as first in buying, first in selling, first in all matters of business — coming into the Synagogue and House of Study last and leave first (so that all should rise out of respect) (cf. Sifrei Devarim 15:3).
שרי אלפים means, one officer who is appointed over one thousand.
שרי מאות means, one who is appointed over one hundred.
ושטרים AND COURT-OFFICERS — i.e., and also I appointed court-officers over you, לשבטיכם ACCORDING TO YOUR TRIBES — these are they who bind and flog with the lash at the bidding of the judges (cf. Sifrei Devarim 15:5).

Verse 16

ואצוה את שפטיכם AND I COMMANDED YOUR JUDGES — I said to them: be deliberate in judgment: if a certain point of law comes before you once, twice, three times, do not say, "This point of law has already come before me several times", but discuss it well on that occasion also (Sifrei Devarim 16:1).
בעת ההוא [AND I COMMANDED YOUR JUDGES] AT THAT TIME — As soon as I appointed them, I said to them, "It is not now as heretofore: heretofore you were your own masters (lit., under your own control), now you are in the service of the Community!" (Sifrei Devarim 16:2).
שמע — This grammatical form expresses constant doing: oyant in old French, be hearing, just as זכור and שמור (see Rashi on Numbers 25:17).
ובין גרו AND BETWEEN HIS גר — this is his opponent in the lawsuit who merely heaps up (אוגר) words against him. Another explanation of AND BETWEEN HIS גר — also in a matter concerning a dwelling house (גור = to dwell), — in the division of property amongst brothers, even if it be a dispute about an oven and a kitchen range (cf. Sifrei Devarim 16:8-9; Sanhedrin 7b).

Verse 17

לא תכירו פנים במשפט YE SHALL NOT RESPECT PERSONS IN JUDGMENT — This is addressed to him whose office it is to appoint judges — that he should not say, Mr. So-and-so is a fine or a strong man, I will make him a judge; Mr. So-and-so is my relative, I will make him a judge in the city, — while in reality he is not expert in the laws, and consequently he will condemn the innocent and acquit the guilty — I will account it unto him

who appointed him as though he had shown favor in judgment (Sifrei Devarim 17:1).
כקטן כגדל תשמעון YE SHALL HEAR THE SMALL AS WELL AS THE GREAT, i.e. that a lawsuit regarding a peruta shall be as dear to you (shall be as of equal importance) as a lawsuit regarding a hundred maneh — that if it (the former) comes before you first, you should not set it aside until the last (Sanhedrin 8a). — Another explanation of YE SHALL HEAR THE SMALL AS WELL AS THE GREAT — Understand it as the Targum has it: Ye shall hearken unto the words of the small as to those of the great — i.e. that you should not say: This is a poor man and his fellow (opponent) is rich, and is in any case bidden to support him; I will find in favour of the poor man, and he will consequently obtain some support in a respectable fashion (see Rashi on Leviticus 19:15). — Another explanation is: that you should not say, "How can I offend against the honour of this rich man because of one dinar? I will for the moment decide in his favour, and when he goes outside (leaves the court) I will say to him, 'Give it to him because in fact you owe it to him'" (Sifrei Devarim 17:3).
לא תגורו מפני איש means: YE SHALL NOT FEAR [ANY MAN]. — Another explanation of לא תגורו: Ye shall not gather in (shall not restrain) your words before any man. The word has the same meaning as in (Proverbs 10:5), "Gathering (אוגר) in summer" (cf. Sanhedrin 8a).
כי המשפט לאלהים הוא FOR THE JUDGMENT IS GOD'S — Whatever you take from this man unjustly you will compel Me to restore to him; it follows, therefore, that you have wrested judgment against Me (Sanhedrin 8a).
תקרבון אלי [AND THE CAUSE THAT IS TOO HARD FOR YOU] BRING TO ME [AND I WILL HEAR IT] — On account of this utterance (that he could decide difficult cases) the law regarding the daughters of Zelophehad evaded him (Sanhedrin 8a; see Rashi on Numbers 27:5). Similarly, Samuel said to Saul (I Samuel 9:19), "I" am the seer. Whereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, "By your life, I will let you know that you are not a seer". And when did he let him know this? When he came to anoint David. For Scripture states, (I Samuel 16:6, 7) "And when he saw Eliab he said, Surely before the Lord stands his anointed one". The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: "Did you not say, "I" am the seer? Look not at the outward appearance" (Sifrei Devarim 17:7).

Verse 18

את כל הדברים אשר תעשון [AND I COMMANDED YOU …] ALL THE THINGS THAT YE SHOULD DO — These are the ten things that constitute the difference between civil cases and capital cases (Sifrei Devarim 18:1; cf. Sanhedrin 32a).

Verse 19

המדבר הגדול והנורא [THAT]. GREAT AND FEARFUL WILDERNESS — [It is termed fearful] because there were in it serpents thick as beams and scorpions as bows (Sifrei Devarim 18:2).

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

ותקרבון אלי כלכם AND YE APPROACHED ME ALL OF YOU — all of you: in a crowd. But further on (Deuteronomy 5:20, 21) it states, "Ye approached me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders, and ye said, Behold [the Eternal our God] hath shown us [His glory and His greatness]'': That approach to me was a fitting one — young people showing respect to their elders, letting these precede them, and the elders showing respect to the heads of the tribes that these should precede them. Here, however, ye approached me, all of you, in a crowd, the young pushing aside their olders, the elders pushing aside the heads (Sifrei Devarim 20:1).
וישבו אתנו דבר AND THEY SHALL BRING US WORD — i.e. they shall report to us in what language they speak (Sifrei Devarim 20:3).
את הדרך אשר נעלה בה BY WHAT WAY WE MUST GO UP — you will rarely find a road in which there is not some zigzag course (Sifrei Devarim 20:4).
ואת הערים אשר נבא אליהן AND UNTO WHAT CITIES WE SHALL COME first to capture them (cf. Sifrei Devarim 20:5).

Verse 23

וייטב בעיני הדבר AND THE MATTER WAS GOOD IN MY SIGHT — in my sight, said Moses, but not in the sight of the Omnipresent God. — But if it was good in Moses' sight why did he mention it in these reproofs? A parable! It may he compared to the case of a man who says to his fellow, "Sell me this ass of yours". He replies to him, "Yes". He asks him, "Will you give it to me on trial?" He replies: "Yes". — "May I try it on hills and mountains?" Again he replies, "Yes" — When he sees that he puts no obstacles in his way, the would-be purchaser says to himself: "This man is quite confident that I shall not find any defect in it", and he at once says to him, "Take your money, I need not now put it to trial". I, too, consented to your words, thinking that you would perhaps turn back on yourselves (re-consider the question of sending spies) when you saw that I put no obstacle in your way, but you did not re-consider (Sifrei Devarim 21:1).
ואקח מכם AND I TOOK OF YOU — of the choicest that were amongst you, of the finest that were amongst you (Sifrei Devarim 21:2).
שנים עשר אנשים איש אחד לשבט [AND I TOOK] … TWELVE MEN, ONE MAN FOR A TRIBE — This (the statement: "twelve men") tells us that the tribe of Levi was not with them in this request (Sifrei Devarim 21:3; cf. Rashi on Numbers 31:4).

Verse 24

עד נחל אשכל [AND THEY CAME] TO THE BROOK OF ESHCOL — This tells us that it was so called on account of what was eventually, to happen there [— that they took from there a cluster (אשכל) of grapes] (Sifrei Devarim 22:2).
וירגלו אתה AND THEY SPIED IT OUT — This teaches that they passed through it along four lines, along the length and the breadth (Sifrei Devarim 22:3; cf. Rashi on Numbers 13:21).

Verse 25

ויורדו אלינו AND THEY BROUGHT IT DOWN TO US — This tells us that the land of Israel is situated higher than all other countries (Sifrei Devarim 23:2).
ויאמרו טובה הארץ AND THEY SAID, THE LAND IS GOOD — Who were they who spoke of it being good? Joshua and Caleb (Sifrei Devarim 23:3).

Verse 26

ותמרו — This is an expression denoting setting oneself in opposition: ye opposed yourselves to His words.

Verse 27

ותרגנו — This is an expression denoting slander. Similar is, (Proverbs 18:8) "The words of a נרגן" i.e. of a man who brings a false report (Sifrei Devarim 24:1).
בשנאת ה' אתנו BECAUSE THE LORD HATETH US — Really, however, He loved you, but you hated Him. A common proverb says: What is in your own mind about your friend, you imagine is what is in his mind about you (Sifrei Devarim 24:3).
בשנאת ה' אתנו הוציאנו מארץ מצרים BECAUSE THE LORD HATETH US HE HATH BROUGHT US FORTH FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT — His bringing us forth was out of hatred. A parable! It may be compared to an earthly king who had two sons, and who had two fields, one well-watered; the other arid (dependent upon rain only). To him whom he loved best of his sons he gave the well-watered field, and to him whom he loved less he gave the arid one. The land of Egypt is a well-watered country, for the Nile rises and irrigates it, whilst the land of Canaan is an arid country — and He brought us forth from well-watered Egypt to give us the arid land of Canaan (Numbers Rabbah 17:3).

Verse 28

ערים גדלת ובצורת בשמים THE CITIES ARE GREAT AND FORTIFIED TO HEAVEN — Scriptural texts sometimes speak in exaggerated terms (Sifrei Devarim 25:4; Chullin 90b).

Verse 29

לא תערצון — This is an expression denoting breaking, as the Targum translates it: You should not let yourselves be broken by them. Similar to it is, (Job 30:6) "To dwell in ערוץ נחלים", i.e. in the fissure of the valleys.

Verse 30

ילחם לכם means, [HE WILL FIGHT] ON YOUR BEHALF.

Verse 31

ובמדבר אשר ראית — This is to be connected with the verse preceding: "according to all that He did for you in Egypt" "and" which He also did "in the wilderness, where thou hast seen how that [the Lord thy God] bore thee, etc.
כאשר ישא איש את בנו AS A MAN DOTH BEAR HIS SON — The meaning is just as I have explained in connection with the verse (Exodus 14:19—20), "And the angel of the Lord that went before the camp of the Israelites moved, etc.". A parable! It may be compared to one who is proceeding on a journey, his son walking in front of him. If bandits come to kidnap him (the son), he takes him away from in front of him and places him behind himself, etc.

Verse 32

ובדבר הזה YET IN REGARD TO THIS THING that He promised you, viz., to bring you to the Land, you did not believe in Him (because the promise has not yet been fulfilled).

Verse 33

לראתכם — This word is the same as לְהַרְאֹתְכֶם. Similar, too, is לנחתם הדרך (like לְהַנְחֹתָם; see Rashi on Exodus 13:21). So also (Psalms 26:7) לשמיע בקול תודה [like לְהַשְׁמִיעַ], also, (2 Kings 9:15) ללכת לגיד ביזרעל [like לְהַגִּיד]

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

אשר דרך בה [AND TO HIM WILL I GIVE THE LAND] THAT HE TROD UPON — viz., Hebron, as it is said, (Numbers 13:22) "And he (Caleb) came to Hebron".

Verse 37

התאנף means HE WAS FILLED WITH ANGER.

Verse 38

Verse 39

Verse 40

פנו לכם TURN YE — I thought to let you pass across the breadth of the land of Edom in a northerly direction and thus enter the Land (cf. Rashi on Numbers 34:3); you, however, became degenerate and caused this delay for yourselves.
פנו לכם TURN YE backwards, and proceed through the wilderness towards the Red Sea; — for the wilderness through which they were travelling was to the south of Mount Seir separating the Red Sea from Mount Seir. — Now proceed in the direction of the Sea and travel round Mount Seir along the whole of its south side from the west to the east.

Verse 41

ותהינו — This is an expression derived from the word הננו in (Numbers 14:40) "Here we are (הננו) and we will go up to the place". This is the expression which you uttered — the expression הן, "yes". The word, therefore, means as much as: you expressed your readiness to go up into the mountain.

Verse 42

לא תעלו "GO NOT UP" — There will be no "ascent" for you, but only a descent (defeat) (cf. Rashi on Numbers 16:12 and Numbers Rabbah 17:3).

Verse 43

Verse 44

כאשר תעשינה הדברים [AND THEY PURSUED YOU] AS BEES DO — Just as a bee when it stings a person it dies immediately, similarly they (the Amorites): when they attacked you they died immediately (Numbers Rabbah 17:3).

Verse 45

ולא שמע ה' בקלכם BUT THE LORD WOULD NOT HEAR YOUR VOICE — If it is at all possible to say so of God, you made His attribute of mercy as though it were cruel (Numbers Rabbah 17:3).

Verse 46

ותשבו בקדש ימים רבים SO YE ABODE IN KADESH MANY DAYS — viz., nineteen years, as it is said here כימים אשר ישבתם, ACCORDING TO THE DAYS THAT YE ABODE, i.e. abode at all the other stations. They (the total years) were thirtyeight years; nineteen of them they spent at Kadesh, and nineteen years they went moving about aimlessly, and then they returned to Kadesh, as it is said, (Numbers 32:13) "And he made them move about in the wilderness". — Thus have I found in Seder Olam 8.

Chapter 2

Verse 1

ונפן ונסע המדברה THEN WE TURNED AND JOURNEYED INTO THE WILDERNESS — If they had not sinned, they would have passed by the way of Mount Seir to enter the Land from its south to its north, but because they became degenerate they had to turn towards the wilderness which is between the Red Sea and the south of Mount Seir, and they proceeded along its southern side from the west to the east, דרך ים סוף BY THE ROUTE FROM THE RED SEA — i.e. by the route which they had taken on leaving Egypt which is at the south-west corner. From there (where they were at that moment) they went towards the east.
ונסב את הר שעיר AND WE COMPASSED MOUNT SEIR, the whole of the south side as far as the land of Moab.

Verse 2

Verse 3

פנו לכם צפנה TURN YOU NORTHWARD — Turn you along the eastern side of Moab, from the south to the north, your faces directed to the north. Consequently they were travelling along the east side of Moab, and this is what is meant by (Judges 11:18) "And they came by the east side of the land of Moab".

Verse 4

ונשמרתם מאד TAKE YE GOOD HEED TO YOURSELVES — And what is this "taking heed"? What follows: אל תתגרו בם CONTEND NOT WITH THEM.

Verse 5

עד מדרך כף רגל — This means, Even מדרך כף רגל, as much as to say: even only treading with the feet (a single step). The text means, I do not permit you to pass into their land without their permission. — A Midrashic explanation is: I shall not give you of their land until there come the day of the treading of the sole of foot upon the Mount of Olives (the Messianic period), as it is said, (Zechariah 14:4) "And his feet shall stand [in that day upon the Mount of Olives etc.]".
ירשה לעשו [I HAVE GIVEN MOUNT SEIR] TO ESAU AS AN INHERITANCE from Abraham. The territory of ten clans I gave (promised) him (Abraham); seven of them will be yours (the seven clans of Canaan), and the Kenites, the Kenizzites and the Kadmonites, — who are Ammon, Moab and Seir — one of them already belongs to Esau, and the other two to the children of Lot (cf. Genesis Rabbah 44:23; and Rashi on Genesis 15:19); as a reward because he (Lot) went with him (Abraham) To Egypt, and kept silent about what he said regarding his wife, "She is my sister", he treated him as his son (and therefore he, through his children Amon and Moab, inherited part of the land promised to him) (cf. Rashi on Genesis 19:29 and Genesis Rabbah 51:6).

Verse 6

תכרו — This is an expression denoting purchase. Similar is (Genesis 50:5; see Rashi thereon), "which I have bought (כריתי) for myself", for thus in the coast cities do they use for "trading" the term כירה (Rosh Hashanah 26a).

Verse 7

כי ה' אלהיך ברכך FOR THE LORD THY GOD HATH BLESSED THEE — therefore you should not show yourselves ungrateful to Him by behaving as though you were poor, but act as rich people.

Verse 8

ונפן ונעבר AND WE TURNED AND PASSED, towards the north; we turned our faces to proceed along the eastern side (see Rashi on v. 3).

Verse 9

ואל תתגר בם וגו׳ AND DO NOT CONTEND WITH THEM [IN WAR] — As regards Moab He forbade them (the Israelites) only war against them, but they may frighten them, appearing before them when equipped for war; therefore it is written, (Numbers 22:3) "And Moab was afraid because of the people", because they took plunder and loot from them. But about the children of Ammon it is said, (v. 19) "Do not contend with them" — no provocation of any kind, — as a reward for the modesty shown by their ancestress, Lot's younger daughter, who did not publicly divulge regarding her father's conduct, as his elder daughter did, who called her son's name "Moab" (i.e. born of the father) (Bava Kamma 38b; see Rashi on Genesis 19:37). ער is the name of the district.

Verse 10

האמים לפנים וגו׳ THE EMIM [ABODE THERE] FORMERLY — You might think that this is the land of the Rephaim which I gave (promised) to Abraham (Genesis 15:20), because the Emim who are Rephaim, dwelt there formerly (and they are one of the seven clans whose land you were to possess), but this is not that land, because those Rephaim I drove out from before the children of Lot and settled these in their stead (cf. Rashi on 3:13).

Verse 11

רפאים יחשבו וגו׳ THEY [ALSO] ARE ACCOUNTED REPHAIM, [AS THE ANAKIM] — As Rephaim are those Emim accounted, even as the Anakim — who are also termed Rephaim because the hands of everyone who beheld them became weak (רפה) (cf. Genesis Rabbah 26:7).
אמים — so called because the dread (אימה) of them lay upon the people. — So, too, (v. 12) the Horim dwelt formerly in Seir and I gave them over unto the children of Esau. (Genesis Rabbah 26:7)

Verse 12

יירשום — This is a present tense form of the verb; it is as much as to say, I gave them power that they might go on driving them out continuously.

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

היתה בם [FOR INDEED THE HAND OF THE LORD] WAS AGAINST THEM [TO DESTROY THEM] speedily within a period of forty years, so that they should no longer be the cause for their children to tarry in the wilderness.

Verse 16

ויהי כאשר תמו וגו׳ וידבר ה' אלי וגו׳ SO IT CAME TO PASS WHEN [ALL THE MEN OF WAR] HAD COME TO AN END … THAT THE LORD SPOKE TO ME etc. — But from when the spies were sent forth until now, the word וידבר is not mentioned in this section, but ויאמר, to teach you that during these entire thirty eight years during which the Israelites were lying under God’s censure, the Divine speech was not directed towards him in an expression of affection, face to face, and with tranquility of mind — to teach you that the Shechinah rests upon the prophets only for Israel’s sake (Sifra, Vayikra Dibbura d'Nedavah, Chapter 2 13; Mekhilta; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 1:1 towards end).
אנשי המלחמה THE MEN OF WAR — men from twenty years old and upwards, who went to war (cf. Numbers 14:29 and Rashi thereon).

Verse 17

Verse 18

אתה עבר היום את גבול מואב … וקרבת מול בני עמון THOU ART TO PASS THIS DAY THE BOUNDARY OF MOAB … AND THOU WILT APPROACH OPPOSITE THE CHILDREN OF AMMON — from here we see that the land of Ammon was on the north [of Moab].

Verse 19

Verse 20

ארץ רפאים תחשב IT (AMMON) ALSO WAS ACCOUNTED A LAND OF REPHAIM. — It also is accounted a land of Rephaim because the Rephaim formerly dwelt in it, but yet it is not that land which I gave to Abraham.

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

והעוים הישבים בחצרים וגו׳ BUT THE AVIM WHO DWELL IN HAZERIM etc. —The Avim are part of the Philistine people, for they are enumerated together with them in the Book of Joshua (Joshua 13:3), as it is said, "The five lords of the Philistines, the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, and the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also the Avim". But because of the oath which Abraham had sworn to Abimelech, king of the Philistines (Genesis 21:24), Israel would have been unable to take their land out of their possession; but, says God, I brought the Caphtorites against them and they destroyed them and dwelt in their stead, and now you are permitted to take it (that land) from their (the Caphtorites) possession (Chullin 60b).

Verse 24

Verse 25

תחת כל השמים [THIS DAY I BEGIN TO PUT THE DREAD OF THEE … UPON THE NATIONS THAT ARE] UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN — This (the statement that the nations under the entire heaven will dread the Israelites) teaches that the sun stood still for Moses on the day of the battle with Og, and the matter was consequently known under the whole heaven (Avodah Zarah 25a).

Verse 26

ממדבר קדמות [AND I SENT MESSENGERS] FROM THE WILDERNESS OF KEDEMOTH — Although the Omnipresent had not commanded me to proclaim peace unto Sihon I learnt to do so from what happened in the wilderness of Sinai, i.e. from an incident that relates to the Torah which pre-existed (קדמה) the world. For when the Holy One, blessed be He, was about to give it (the Torah) to Israel, he took it round to Esau and Ishmael. It was manifest before Him that they would not accept it, but yet He opened unto them with peace. Similarly I first approached Sihon with words of peace. — Another explanation of ממדבר קדמות: Moses said to God, "I learnt this from what Thou didst say in the wilderness — from Thee Who wast in existence before (קדמת) the world. Thou couldst have sent one flash of lightning to bum up the Egyptians, but Thou didst send me from the wilderness to Pharaoh, to say gently, (Exodus 5:1) "Let my people go" (Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 764:27).

Verse 27

Verse 28

Verse 29

כאשר עשו לי בגי עשו AS THE CHILDREN OF ESAU DID TO ME — This does not refer to passing through their land (רק אעברה ברגלי) for Edom refused this, (cf. Numbers 20:18) but to the matter of selling food and water (also mentioned in the preceding verse).
עד אשר אעבר את הירדן UNTIL I SHALL PASS OVER THE JORDAN — This is to be connected with "Let me pass through thy land" (v. 27).

Verse 30

Verse 31

החלתי תת לפניך I HAVE BEGUN TO GIVE [SIHON] BEFORE THEE — He cast down the tutelary angel of the Amorites, who was in the upper spheres, beneath Moses' feet and made him tread upon his neck (cf. Rashi on Numbers 24:2).

Verse 32

ויצא סיחן AND SIHON WENT FORTH — He did not send for Og to help him: this serves to teach you that they did not require one another's help, so mighty was each of them.

Verse 33

ואת בנו [AND WE SMOTE HIM] AND HIS SONS — It is written בנו, "his son" (although read as בניו "his sons"), for he had a son who was as mighty as himself (Midrash Tanchuma, Chukat 25).

Verse 34

מתם means MEN. — Of the spoil taken from Sihon it is stated (v. 35) בזזנו לנו, an expression denoting plunder (בזה), because then this was an object of desire to them, so that each man took spoil for himself. But when they came to the plundering of Og, they were already full to satiety, and it was contemptible in their eyes, so that they tore in pieces and cast away cattle and garments, and took only silver and gold. On this account it is said (Deuteronomy 3:7) בַּזּונו לנו which is an expression denoting "holding in contempt" (בזיון). Thus is it expounded in Siphre in the chapter beginning with "And Israel dwelt in Shittim" (Numbers 25:1).

Verse 35

Verse 36

Verse 37

כל יד נחל יבק means, ALL THE DISTRICT BESIDE THE BROOK OF JABBOK.

וכל אשר צוה ה' אלהינו לנו — This means, AND ALL WHICH THE LORD OUR GOD COMMANDED US not to capture, we left.

Chapter 3

Verse 1

ונפן ונעל AND WE TURNED AND WENT UP — every journey towards the north (from the wilderness towards Canaan) is "uphill".

Verse 2

אל תירא אתו DO NOT FEAR HIM — In the case of Sihon, however, it did not feel it necessary to state, "Do not fear him"!? But in the case of Og Moses feared lest the merit that he (Og) had been of service to Abraham might avail him, as it is said, (Genesis 14:13: see Rashi thereon), "And the fugitive came", and that was Og (Genesis Rabbah 42:8; see Rashi on Numbers 21:34).

Verse 3

Verse 4

חבל ארגב [ALL] THE LINE OF ARGOB — We render this in the Targum by בית פלך טרכונא Now I have seen that the Jerusalem Targum of the Scroll of Esther terms a palace טרכונין. I learn from this that חבל ארגב signifies "the province of the Royal Palace", denoting that the province is called after its name (after the name of the palace). Similarly, also the term ארגוב found in the Book of Kings (2 15:25) where the meaning is that Pekah the son of Remaliah slew Pekahia the son of Menahem near the king's palace (את ארגוב), I learn that thus (after the palace) was the province named.

Verse 5

מערי הפרזי [BESIDES] UNWALLED CITIES — unconfined and open, i.e. without a wall. Similar is, (Zechariah 2:8) "As open spaces (פרזות) shall Jerusalem be inhabited".

Verse 6

החרם — This has a present frequentative meaning: going on and destroying (see Rashi on Numbers 25:17).

Verse 7

Verse 8

מיד means, FROM THE CONTROL OF.

Verse 9

צידנים יקראו לחרמון וגו׳ THE SIDONIANS CALL HERMON SIRION — But in another passage it states, (Deuteronomy 4:48) "Even unto Mount Sion which

is Hermon”. So you see it had four names. And why had they all to be written in Scripture? To tell the praise of the land of Israel: that there were four kingdoms (kings) priding themselves in this — one saying, "After me shall it be named", and another saying, "After me shall it be named" (Sifrei Devarim 37:10; cf. Chullin 60b).
שניר SHENIR — This signifies "snow" in the German language (Schnee) and in the Canaanite (Slav) language (Snih).

Verse 10

Verse 11

מיתר הרפאים [ONLY OG … REMAINED] OF THE REST OF THE REPHAIM whom Amraphel and his allies slew in Ashteroth-Karnaim (Genesis 14:5), and he (Og) escaped from the battle, as it is said, (Genesis 14:13) "And the fugitive came", and that was Og (Genesis Rabbah 42:8; cf. Rashi on Genesis 14.13.1).
באמת איש AFTER THE CUBIT OF A MAN — i.e. after the cubit of Og.

Verse 12

ואת הארץ הזאת AND THIS LAND mentioned above (v. 8), "from the brook of Arnon to Mount Hermon", ירשנו בעת ההוא WE POSSESSED AT THAT TIME.
מערער אשר על נחל ארנן FROM AROER, WHICH IS BY THE BROOK ARNON — this must not be connected with the first part of this verse (defining הארץ הזאת) but with its conclusion — with נתתי לראבני ולגדי I GAVE TO THE REUBENITES AND TO THE GADITES; however, as respects possession (taking by conquest) that was "[from the brook of Arnon] to Mount Hermon" (v. 8).

Verse 13

ההוא יקרא ארץ רפאים IT IS THAT WHICH IS CALLED THE LAND OF REPHAIM — it is that which I gave to Abraham (cf. Rashi on 2:20).

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

תוך הנחל וגבול THE MIDST OF THE BROOK AND THE TERRITORY, i.e., all the brook and in addition, land on its opposite bank. The words therefore are as much as to say, עד "unto” the Brook of Arnon, ועד "and” that which is mentioned as being "unto” (i.e. the Brook itself) is included (by the words תוך הנחל), and even more than this (namely, the גבול, land on the other side of the brook).

Verse 17

מכנרת FROM CHINNERETH — This is on the western side of Jordan. The inheritance of the children of Gad was in the east side of the Jordan, and there fell as their lot the width of the Jordan, adjoining their territory, and in addition, land on its opposite bank up to Chinnereth.

This is the meaning of what is said here, "And the Jordan and the territory thereof", i.e. the Jordan and some land on its opposite bank.

Verse 18

ואצו אתכם AND I COMMANDED YOU — He now addresses himself to the sons of Reuben and the sons of Gad.
לפני אחיכם [YE SHALL PASS OVER EQUIPPED] BEFORE YOUR BRETHREN — they used to go in front of the other Israelites into battle because they were mighty men, and the enemy fell before them, as it is said of Gad, (Deuteronomy 33:20) "He tears the arm together with the crown" (cf. Rashi on Numbers 32:17).

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

ואתחנן — All forms of the verb חנן signify an ex gratia gift. Although the righteous might make a claim to reward depend Upon their good deeds, yet they solicit from the Omnipresent only an ex gratia gift. [Because He had said to him, (Exodus 33:19) "I will show grace (וחנתי) unto him to whom I will show grace", he (Moses) when referring to his entreaty of God uses the expression (lit., spoke to Him) "I implored grace (ואתחנן)" (Midrash Tanchuma 5:2:3] — Another explanation is that the idea of an ex gratia gift is not to be stressed; but this is merely one of the ten terms by which prayer is described, as are enumerated in Sifrei Devarim 26:7.
בעת ההוא [I IMPLORED GRACE OF GOD] AT THAT TIME — After I had subdued the land of Sihon and Og I thought that perhaps the vow that I should not enter the land was annulled, since this was part of the land of Canaan (cf. Sifrei Devarim 26:8 and Rashi on Numbers 27:12).
לאמר TO SAY (i.e. that God should say) — This is one of the three occasions where Moses spoke before the Omnipresent: I will not let You go until You tell me whether You will fulfill my request or not (Sifrei Devarim 26:9; cf. Rashi on Numbers 12:13).

Verse 24

אדני אלהים O LORD, GOD — O Thou Who art. merciful (ה׳) in judgment (אלהים) (cf. Sifrei Devarim 26:10).
אתה החלות להראות את עבדך THOU DIDST BEGIN TO SHOW THY SERVANT an opening to stand and offer prayer, although the decree has been enacted; he said to Him: I learned to do so from Thee, for Thou didst say to me, (Exodus 32:10; cf. Rashi thereon) "And now, leave Me alone". Was I, then, holding Thee? But Thou didst say this to open the door and to show that it

depended upon me to pray for them. Just so do I think to act now (Sifrei Devarim 27:2).
את גדלך [TO SHOW] THY GREATNESS — This means Thy attribute of goodness. Similarly it states, (Numbers 14:17, 18) "And now, I beseech Thee, let the strength of my Lord be great, [according as thou hast spoken, saying: The Lord is long-suffering and of much mercy, etc."].
ואת ידך AND THY [STRONG] HAND — This refers to Thy right hand which is extended to all who enter the world (all human beings) [to receive them in penitence] (Sifrei Bamidbar 134:5).
החזקה [THY] STRONG [HAND] — I speak of it as Thy strong hand, because by showing mercy Thou forcibly (בחזקה) subduest the attribute of strict justice (Sifrei Bamidbar 134:5).
אשר מי אל וגו׳ FOR WHAT GOD IS THERE [… WHO CAN DO ACCORDING TO THY WORKS] — Thou art unlike a mortal king who has counsellors and assessors who would prevent him when he wishes to show kindness and to forgo, what is due to him: Thou, however, — there is none who can prevent Thee if Thou pardonest me and dost annul Thy decree (Sifrei Devarim 27:6). But according to its plain sense it means: "Thou hast begun to show Thy servant the war with Sihon and Og, as it is written, (Deuteronomy 2:31) "Behold I have begun to give [Sihon and his land] before thee"; let me behold also the war with the thirty-one kings of Canaan.

Verse 25

אעברה נא LET ME PASS OVER, I PRAY THEE — The term נא is a term of request (it does not here signify "now").
ההר הטוב הזה THAT GOODLY MOUNTAIN, i.e. Jerusalem (that was situated on hills) (Sifrei Bamidbar 134:5).
והלבנון AND LEBANON — this is a term for the Temple (Siphre).

Verse 26

ויתעבר ה׳ This means, GOD WAS FILLED WITH WRATH (Sifrei Bamidbar 135).
למענכם ON ACCOUNT OF YOU — You caused this for me (that God was wroth with me); similarly it states, (Psalms 106:32) "And they provoked Him at the waters of Meriba, and He did evil to Moses on their account".
רב לך LET IT SUFFICE THEE (i.e. pray no more), so that people should not say, "How harsh is the Master, and how obstinate and importunate is the disciple" (Sotah 13b). Another explanation of רב לך (lit., there is much for you) — more than this is reserved for you; much is the goodness that is stored up for thee (Sifrei Bamidbar 135).

Verse 27

וראה בעיניך [LIFT UP THINE EYES …] AND SEE IT WITH THINE EYES — Thou didst request of Me, (v. 25) "Let me see the good land"; I will let thee see the whole of it (not the good territory alone), as it is said, (Deuteronomy 34:1) "And the Lord showed him all the land" (cf. Sifrei Bamidbar 135).

Verse 28

וצו את יהושע AND GIVE JOSHUA CHARGE regarding the cumbrance, the burdens and strifes that he will have to bear (cf. Deuteronomy 1:12).
וחזקהו ואמצהו AND STRENGTHEN HIM AND MAKE HIM FIRM through thy words, so that he may not become faint-hearted, saying, "Just as my master was punished on account of them, so eventually will I be punished on account of them and not enter the land. I promise him "that he shall pass over [before this people] and he shall cause [them] to inherit [the land]"" (cf. Sifrei Devarim 29:9).

כי הוא יעבר (this may mean: if he passes) — If he will pass before them, they will possess the land, and if not, they will not possess it. So, indeed, you find that when he sent some of the people against Ai and he remained in the camp, “the men of Ai smote of them [thirtysix men]” (Joshua 7:5). And when he fell on his face, He said to him, קם לך: the verb is written קם (without ו, so that it may be read קָם) i.e. “It is thou who standest in thy place and sendest My children to war, who hast brought about this defeat. Why is it that thou fallest on thy face? Did I not thus tell thy master, Moses: If he will pass, they will pass on, but if not, they will not pass on? (Sifrei Devarim 29:9).

Verse 29

ונשב בגיא וגו׳ SO WE ABODE IN THE VALLEY [OVER AGAINST BETH PEOR], — and ye associated yourselves with idol-worship, yet, however, ועתה ישראל שמע אל החקים NOW, O ISRAEL, HEARKEN TO THE STATUTES and everything will be forgiven thee. But I — I was not privileged that it was forgiven me (Sifrei Devarim 30:2).

Chapter 4

Verse 1

Verse 2

לא תספו YE SHALL NOT ADD — For instance, to place five chapters in the Tephillin, to employ five species of fruit and plants in the fulfilment of the command of Lulab And to place five fringes on one’s garment. Thus, too, must we explain the following words ולא תגרעו, Ye shall not diminish [from it]" (Sifrei Devarim 82:4).

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

ושמרתם AND YE SHALL BE ON THE WATCH [TO DO] — This refers to the study of the laws (Sifrei Devarim 58),
ועשיתם — this must be explained according to what it implies: AND YE SHALL DO.
כי היא חכמתכם ובינתכם וגו׳ FOR THIS IS YOUR WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING [IN THE EYES OF THE PEOPLES] — i.e. through this ye will be accounted wise and understanding men in the eyes of the peoples.

Verse 7

Verse 8

חקים ומשפטים צדיקים STATUTES AND RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS — i.e. proper and acceptable ones.

Verse 9

רק השמר לך … פן תשכח את הדברים ONLY TAKE HEED TO THYSELF … LEST THOU FORGET THE THINGS — But only then when you do not forget them but will do them in their correct manner, will you be accounted wise and understanding men, but if you do them in an incorrect manner through forgetfulness, you will be accounted foolish.

Verse 10

יום אשר עמדת THE DAY THAT THOU STOODEST — This is to be connected with the preceding verse thus: [The things] which thine eyes saw … on the day that thou stoodest … at Horeb, — where thou didst perceive the thunder and lightning.
וְיִלְמְדוּן — The Targum is וְיִלְפוּן, "They shall learn" (more lit., the action reverts to themselves), while —
וְלַמְּדוּן the Targum is וְיַאלְפוּן, "They shall teach" (more lit., the action reverts to others).

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

ואתי צוה, ה' ללמד אתכם AND THE LORD COMMANDED ME TO TEACH YOU, the Oral Law.

Verse 15

Verse 16

סמל means "form".

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

ופן תשא עיניך AND LEST THOU LIFT UP THINE EYES to ponder on the matter, and to set your heart to go astray after them.
אשר חלק ה׳ WHICH THE LORD ASSIGNED to give light to them (to all peoples) (Megillah 9b). — Another explanation: which God assigned to them as deities; He did not prevent them from going astray after them, but He allowed them to err (to slip) through vain speculations, in order to drive them out from the world. Similarly it states, (Psalms 36:3) "He (God) made him err (slip) through his eyes (i.e. through what his eyes behold) until his iniquity be found and he be hated" (Avodah Zarah 55a).

Verse 20

מכור — a כור is a vessel in which one refines gold.

Verse 21

התאנף means, HE WAS FILLED WITH WRATH.
על דבריכם means, "on your account", "because of your doings".

Verse 22

כי אנכי מת וגו' אינני עבר BUT I MUST DIE [IN THIS LAND], I MUST NOT PASS OVER [THE JORDAN] — Since he was to die, how could he pass over? But he meant: I must die and even my bones will not pass over (Sifrei Bamidbar 135).

Verse 23

תמונת כל means, THE LIKENESS OF ANYTHING.
אשר צוך WHICH THE LORD [THY GOD] COMMANDED THEE — i.e. which He commanded you not to make.

Verse 24

אל קנא A JEALOUS GOD — jealous to take vengeance, in O. F. emportment; glowing in his anger to exact punishment from those who worship idols (cf. Rashi on Numbers 25:11).

Verse 25

ונושנתם AND YE SHALL HAVE BEEN LONG [IN THE LAND] — He gave them a vague intimation that they would be exiled from it at the end of 852 years, according to the numerical value of the word ונושנתם, but He sent them into exile earlier, at the end of 850 years. He did this two years earlier than the numerical value of ונושנתם, in order that the prophecy should not be fulfilled in them "that ye shall utterly perish" (v. 26). This is the meaning of what is said, (Daniel 9:14) "And the Lord hastened in regard to the evil, and He brought it upon us, for the Lord our God is צדיק" — i.e., He acted charitably (צדקה) with us, in that He brought it (the evil) two years before its assigned time (Sanhedrin 38a; Gittin 88a).

Verse 26

העידתי בכם I CALL AS WITNESSES AGAINST YOU [THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH] — Behold I summon them to be witnesses that I have warned you.

Verse 27

Verse 28

ועבדתם שם אלהים AND THERE YE SHALL SERVE GODS — Understand this as the Targum does: And there ye shall serve peoples who serve idols, for since you serve those who serve them (idols) it will be as though you serve them.

Verse 29

Verse 30

Verse 31

לא ירפך means, He will not let loose of thee so as not to hold thee fast by His hands. The expression לא ירפך is an expression signifying: He will not cause something (our Hiphil) — He will not give thee any looseness, i.e. He will not separate you from Him. Similar is (Song 3:4) "I hold him fast, and I will not let him loose (אַרְפֶּנּוּ)", which is not vowelled אֶרְפֶּנּוּ (which is Kal and an impossible form of the root רפה "to be loose"). Always the expression "letting slack (רפה)" in the Hiphil refers to one who causes looseness to others or to one who causes it to himself. For example (2 Kings 4:2) הרפה לה means, "give her looseness"; (Deuteronomy 9:14) הרף ממני means, "Give looseness to thyself from off me".

Verse 32

לימים ראשנים is the same as על ימים ראשנים [ASK NOW] REGARDING THE FORMER DAYS.
ולמקצה השמים AND FROM ONE END OF HEAVEN — i.e. and also ask of all the creatures from one end to the other end of heaven. This is its plain sense, but a Midrashic explanation is: it teaches us regarding Adam's height, that it reached from earth to heaven, and that this is the very same measurement as from one end of heaven to the other (Sanhedrin 38b).
הנהיה כדבר הגדול הזה [ASK] … WHETHER THERE HATH BEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS GREAT THING — And what is the great thing? What is stated in the two following verses: השמע עם וגו׳ DID EVER A PEOPLE HEAR, etc., and

Verse 33

Verse 34

הנסה אלהים which means, HAS ANY GOD DONE MIRACLES (לבוא לקחת לו גוי מקרב גוי),וגו׳ TO GO AND TAKE HIM A NATION [FROM THE MIDST OF A NATION] etc. — All these letters ה are interrogative prefixes, and therefore they are vowelled with Chataph Patach: הֲנהיה, הֲנשמע, הֲשמע, הֲנסה.
במסות BY TRIALS — through trials imposed upon Him He showed them His mighty deeds, as e.g., (Exodus 8:5) "Boast yourself over Me", whether I am able to do so: here you have a trial (putting God to the proof).
באתת i.e. BY SIGNS to confirm that he is the messenger of the Omnipresent, as e.g., (Exodus 4:2) "What is that in your hand?"
ובמפתים these are WONDERS: — that He brought upon them (the Egyptians) wondrous plagues.

ובמלחמה AND BY WAR, at the Red Sea, as it is said, (Exodus 14:25) "For the Lord fought for them".

Verse 35

הראת — Understand this as the Targum has it: Thou hast been shown. When the Holy One, blessed be He, gave the Torah, He rent open to them the seven heavens, and just as he rent open the higher regions so did He rend open the lower, so that they saw that He was alone (sole God). On this account it is stated, "Thou hast been shown that thou mayest know [that the Lord is God, there is none besides Him]" (Pesikta Rabbati 20 towards the end).

Verse 36

Verse 37

ותחת כי אהב AND BECAUSE HE LOVED — i.e., and all this was because He loved thy fathers.
ויוצאך בפניו AND HE BROUGHT THEE OUT BEFORE HIM — like a man who leads his son before him, as it is said, (Exodus 14:19) "And the angel of the Lord that went [before them] moved and went behind them" (see Rashi on that verse). — Another explanation of ויוצאך בפניו AND HE BROUGHT THEE FORTH IN HIS PRESENCE: — i.e. in the presence of his fathers, as it is said, (Psalms 78:12; see Rashi on that verse), "In the presence of their fathers He did wonders". Do not be surprised that it refers to them (the fathers) in the singular number (by בפניו), for you see it has already written about them in the singular number, viz., "And he chose his seed after him" (instead of "their seed after them").

Verse 38

ממך מפניך — Invert it (the order of the words) and then explain it accordingly: to dispossess from before thee (מפניך) nations greater and mightier than thee (ממך)
כיום הזה AS AT THIS DAY — i.e., As you see today.

Verse 39

Verse 40

Verse 41

אז יבדיל — The imperfect form יבדיל instead of הבדיל is to be thus explained (cf. Rashi on Exodus 15:1): He set his attention to be zealous for the matter, — to set them apart. And although they were not to serve as cities of refuge until those of Canaan proper (the western side of the Jordan) were set apart for that purpose, Moses said, Any duty that it is possible for me to perform I will perform (Makkot 10a).
בעבר הירדן מזרחה שמש ON THE SIDE OF THE JORDAN TOWARDS THE SUN-RISING — i.e. on that side which is on the east of Jordan (not the side of the Jordan that is east of Canaan proper).

מזרחה שמש — Because it (the word מזרחה) is in the construct state the ר is vowelled with Chataph (vocal Sheva), the meaning being, "the rising of the sun", i.e., the place of the sun's rising.

Verse 42

Verse 43

Verse 44

וזאת התורה AND THIS IS THE LAW — this which he was about to set forth after this chapter.

Verse 45

אלה העדות … אשר דבר THESE ARE THE TESTIMONIES … WHICH [MOSES] SPAKE — Those are the very same testimonies which he spoke when they came forth from Egypt; and he again repeated it (this law) to them in the plains of Moab.

Verse 46

Verse 47

אשר בעבר הירדן WHO WERE BEYOND THE JORDAN — On the east side of Jordan, because the other side was on the west. [This means on the side opposite the western side.]

Chapter 5

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

לא את אבתינו NOT WITH OUR FATHERS — i.e. not with them alone, כרת ה׳ וגו׳ DID THE LORD MAKE [THIS COVENANT], כי אתנו BUT WITH US etc.

Verse 4

פנים בפנים FACE TO FACE — R. Berechia said: Thus did Moses, in effect, say: Do not think that I am misleading you with something which does not exist at all, as an agent does acting between the vendor and the purchaser; behold, the seller Himself is speaking to you (God who transmitted the Torah to you) (cf. Pesikta Rabbati 21: Pesachim Rabbah 'פ הדברות קמייתא').

Verse 5

לאמר SAYING — This is to be connected with (v. 4), דבר ה' עמכם בהר מתוך האש "[face to face] the Lord spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire", — אנכי וגו', לאמר, saying. "I am the Lord, etc.", ואנכי עמד בין ה' וביניכם WHILST I STOOD BETWEEN THE LORD AND YOU.

Verse 6

Verse 7

על פני BEFORE ME — i.e. in any place where I am, and that is the entire world. Another explanation: so long as I exist (i.e. always) (Mekhilta). — The Ten Commandments — I have already explained them (Exodus 20:1-14).

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

שמור OBSERVE [THE SABBATH DAY] — But in the former Ten Commandments (i.e. where they were first promulgated, in Exodus XX.), it states, "Remember [the Sabbath day]"! The explanation is: Both of them (זכור and שמור) were spoken in one utterance and as one word, and were heard in one hearing (i.e. were heard simultaneously) (Mekhilta).
כאשר צוך [OBSERVE THE SABBATH DAY TO SANCTIFY IT] AS [THE LORD THY GOD] COMMANDED THEE before the giving of the Law, at Marah (Shabbat 87b).

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

וזכרת כי עבד היית וגו' AND THOU SHALT REMEMBER THAT THOU WAST A SLAVE [IN THE LAND OF EGYPT … AND THE LORD BROUGHT THEE FORTH FROM THERE … THEREFORE HE COMMANDS THEE TO KEEP THE SABBATH DAY] — On that condition He freed you — that you should be a servant to Him and observe His commandments.

Verse 16

כאשר צוך [HONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER] AS THE LORD THY GOD HATH COMMANDED THEE — Also regarding honouring parents they received command at Marah, as it is said, (Exodus 15:25) "There He appointed for them a statute and a judgement" (cf. Rashi on that passage and Note p. 243) (Sanhedrin 56b).

Verse 17

ולא תנאף AND THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY — The term ניאוף, "adultery", is technically only applicable in the case of a married woman.

Verse 18

ולא תתאוה — The Targum renders this by ולא תירוג which, too, is an expression denoting "desiring" (חמד the word used in the preceding part of this verse), just as (Genesis 2:9) "נחמד to the eyes", we render in the Targum by "desirable (רגג) to behold".

Verse 19

ולא יסף — We render this in the Targum by ולא פסק "and He did not cease", — [Because it is characteristic of human beings that they are unable to utter all their words in one breath (but must make pauses) and it is characteristic of the Holy One, blessed be He, that this is not so, therefore He did not pause, and since He did not pause, He did not have to resume], — for His voice is strong and goes on continuously (Sanhedrin 17a). Another explanation of ולא יסף: He did not again ever reveal himself with such publicity.

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

ואת תדבר אלינו AND SPEAK THOU (את the feminine form of the pronoun) TO US — you weakened my strength as that of a woman, (cf. Rashi on Numbers 11:15), for I was distressed because of you (because of your words) and you weakened my hands, since I saw that you were not anxious to approach Him out of love. Indeed, was it not better for you to learn from the mouth of the Almighty God, and not to learn from me?!

Chapter 6

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

ה׳ אלהינו ה' אחד means, The Lord who is now our God and not the God of the other peoples of the world, He will at some future time be the One (sole) ה׳, as it is said, (Zephaniah 3:9) "For then I will turn to the peoples a pure language that they may all call upon the name of the Lord", and it is further said, (Zechariah 14:9) "In that day shall the Lord be One (אחד) and His name One" (cf. Sifrei Devarim 31:10).

Verse 5

ואהבת AND THOU SHALT LOVE [THE LORD] — Fulfil His commands out of love, for one who acts out of love is not like him (is on a higher plane than one) who acts out of fear. He who serves his master out of fear, if he (the master) troubles him overmuch, leaves him and goes away (Sifrei Devarim 32:1).
בכל לבבך [THOU SHALT LOVE THE LORD] WITH ALL THY HEART — The form of the noun with two ב instead of the usual form לבך suggests: Love Him with thy two inclinations (the יצר הטוב and the יצר הרע) (Sifrei Devarim 32:3; Berakhot 54a). Another explanation of בכל לבבך, with all thy heart, is that thy heart should not be at variance (i.e. divided, not whole) with the Omnipresent God (Sifrei Devarim 32:4).
ובכל נפשך AND WITH ALL THY SOUL — even though He take thy soul (even though you have to suffer martyrdom to show your love of God) (Sifrei Devarim 32:5; Berakhot 54a, Berakhot 61b).
ובכל מאדך AND WITH ALL THY MIGHT, i.e. with all thy property. You have people whose property is dearer to them than their bodies (life), and it is on this account that there is added, "and with all thy property" (Sifrei Devarim 32:6). — Another explanation of ובכל מאדך is: — Thou shalt love Him whatever measure (מדה) it may be that He metes out to thee, whether it be the measure of good or the measure of calamity. Thus also did David say, (Psalms 116:13 and 3) "If I lift up the cup of salvation, [I will call upon the name of the Lord]; If I find trouble and sorrow, [I will call upon the name of the Lord]".

Verse 6

— What is the "love" that is here commanded? The next verse tells us:
והיו הדברים האלה THESE WORDS [WHICH I COMMAND THEE] SHALL BE [UPON THINE HEART] — for thereby thou wilt arrive at a recognition of the Holy One, blessed be He, and wilt cleave to His ways (Sifrei Devarim 33:1).
אשר אנכי מצוך היום [THESE WORDS] WHICH I COMMAND THEE THIS DAY — this day— they should not be in thine eyes as an antiquated דיוטגמא which no one minds, but as one newly given which everyone gladly welcomes (Sifrei Devarim 33:2; cf. our first Note on p. 248 in the Silbermann edition of Exodus). — The word דיוטגמא in this Midrash signifies: a royal command committed to writing.

Verse 7

ושננתם AND THOU SHALT TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY — This word expresses the idea of being sharply impressed, the meaning being, that they should be impressed (familiar) in thy mouth, so that if a person asks you anything concerning them, you will not need to stammer (hesitate) about it, but tell him forthwith (Sifrei Devarim 34:1; Kiddushin 30a)
לבניך [AND THOU SHALT TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY] UNTO THY CHILDREN — These are the disciples. Everywhere do we find that disciples are termed בנים, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 14:1) "Ye are children (בנים) of the Lord your God"; and it says, (2 Kings 2:3), "The sons of (בני) the prophets who were in Bethel". So. too, do we find in the case of Hezekiah that he taught Torah to all Israel and termed them בנים, as it is said, (II Chronicles 29:11), "My sons (בני) be not now negligent". And even as disciples are termed בנים, "children", so the teacher is termed אב, "father", as it is said, (2 Kings 2:12) that Elisha referred to his teacher Elijah by the words, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, etc." (Sifrei Devarim 34:4).
ודברת בם AND THOU SHALT SPEAK OF THEM — i.e. that your principal topic of conversation should be only about them: make them the principal, and do not make them of secondary importance (Sifrei Devarim 34:6).
ובשכבך AND WHEN THOU LIEST DOWN — One might think that this means: even if one lies down (retires to bed) in the middle of the day, and that ובקומך AND WHEN THOU RISEST UP means: even if you rise up in the middle of the night! It, however, states בשבתך בביתך ובלכתך בדרך WHEN THOU SITTEST IN THY HOUSE AND WHEN THOU WALKEST BY THE WAY: The Torah is thus speaking of the usual way of living, and this therefore means, the usual time of lying down and the usual time of rising up (cf. Sifrei Devarim 36:9).

Verse 8

וקשרתם AND THOU SHALT BIND THEM [… UPON THY HAND] — These are the Tephillin that are placed on the arm,
לטטפות בין עיניך AND THEY SHALL BE FOR FRONTLETS BETWEEN THINE EYES — these are the Tephillin that are placed upon the head. It is in reference to the number of the Scriptural sections contained in them that they are termed טטפת, for טט denotes "two" in Katpi and פת in Afriki denotes "two" (Sanhedrin 4b; cf. Rashi on Exodus 13:16).

Verse 9

מזזות ביתך THE DOORPOSTS OF THY HOUSE — The word is written מזזת, to indicate that it is necessary to fix only one מזוזה to a door (cf. Menachot 34a).
ובשעריך AND UPON THY GATES — the plural is used to include also the gates of courts and the gates of provinces and the gates of cities [in the requirement of mezuzah] (Yoma 11a).

Verse 10

Verse 11

חצובים [CISTERNS] HEWN OUT — Because it (Palestine) was a country of stony ground and rocks, the term "hewn" is applicable here.

Verse 12

מבית עבדים — Understand this as the Targum does: from the house of slavery, i.e. a place where ye were slaves (not from the house that belonged to slaves; cf. Rashi on Exodus 20:2).

Verse 13

ובשמו תשבע AND THOU SHALT SWEAR BY HIS NAME — If thou hast all the characteristics mentioned here, i.e. that thou reverest His name and servest Him, then thou mayest take an oath by mention of His name, for just because thou reverest His name, thou wilt be cautious with thy oath; but if not, thou shalt not so swear.

Verse 14

מאלהי העמים אשר סביבותיכם OF THE GODS OF THE PEOPLE WHO ARE AROUND YOU — The same prohibition applies respecting the gods of those peoples who are distant from you; but, just because you see those who are around you going astray after them, it felt the necessity specially to warn your about them.

Verse 15

Verse 16

במסה IN MASSAH, when they went forth from Egypt: that they put Him to the test in respect to water, as it is said, (Exodus 17:7) that they asked, "Is the Lord amongst us or not?".

Verse 17

Verse 18

הישר והטוב [AND THOU SHALT DO] THAT WHICH IS RIGHT AND GOOD [IN THE EYES OF THE LORD] — This refers to a compromise, acting beyond the strict demands of the law (cf. Rashi on Bava Metzia 108a).

Verse 19

כאשר דבר [TO THRUST OUT ALL THINE ENEMIES] AS [THE LORD] HATH SAID — And where did He promise this? When He said, (Exodus 23:27) "And I will confound all the peoples, etc." (Mekhilta).

Verse 20

כי ישאלך בנך מחר WHEN THY SON ASKETH THEE — There is a usage of the word מחר that refers to a day that only comes after the lapse of some time (and this is so here, i.e. it here means "in time to come", not "to-morrow") (Mekhilta).

Chapter 7

Verse 1

ונשל This is an expression denoting casting away, and throwing to a distance, and similar is, (Deuteronomy 19:5) "and the iron flies off" (ונשל).

Verse 2

ולא תחנם means, THOU SHALT NOT ASCRIBE GRACE (חן) TO THEM: it is forbidden to a person to say "How beautiful is this heathen". Another explanation: thou shalt not grant them a חניה, an encampment (a settlement) in the land (Avodah Zarah 20a).

Verse 3

Verse 4

כי יסיר את בנך מאחרי FOR HE WILL TURN AWAY THY SON FROM FOLLOWING ME — i.e., the son of the heathen when he marries thy daughter, will turn away thy son (grandson) whom thy daughter will bear unto him from following Me. This teaches us, that thy daughter's son who is born of a heathen is termed thy son, but thy son's son, who is born of a heathen woman, is not termed thy son, but her son, for, you see, in regard to the statement: "his daughter thou shalt not take [to thy son]" it does not add "For she will turn away thy son (grandson) from following Me" (Yevamot 23a).

Verse 5

מזבחתיהם — a מזבח is something built up of several stones,
ומצבתם — alludes to a single stone (cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 12:3).
ואשיריהם — Trees which they worship (Avodah Zarah 48a).
ופסליהם — These are images.

Verse 6

Verse 7

לא מרבכם NOT ON ACCOUNT OF YOUR BEING [MORE] NUMEROUS — This is to he understood according to its plain sense. But its Midrashic explanation (taking לא מרבכם in the sense of "not because you are great") is: Because you do not regard yourselves as great when I shower good, upon you, therefore בכם … חשק DID [THE LORD] DELIGHT IN YOU
כי אתם המעט FOR YOU ARE LITTLE — you regard yourselves as small, as, e.g., Abraham did who said, (Genesis 18:27) "For I am dust and ashes", and as, e.g., Moses and Aaron did who said, (Exodus 16:7) "And we, what are we?". Not as Nebuchadnezzar who said, (Isaiah 14:14) "I will be like the Most High", and Sennacherib who said, (Isaiah 36:20) "Who are they among all the gods of these countries [that have delivered their countries out of my hand?]", and Hiram who said, (Er. 28:2), "I am a god, I sit in the seat of God" (Chullin 89a).
כי אתם המעט — Here you have the word כי used in the sense of "because".

Verse 8

כי מאהבת — Here, however, you have the word כי used in the sense of "but": NOT ON ACCOUNT THAT YE WERE MORE NUMEROUS … DID GOD DELIGHT IN YOU … BUT ON ACCOUNT OF THE LORD'S LOVE TO YOU.
ומשמרו את השבועה means, on account of His keeping the oath.

Verse 9

לאלף דור TO A THOUSAND GENERATIONS — But elsewhere (5:10) it states: to thousands of generations! The explanation is: Here where it is connected with (refers to) "those who keep His commandments" it states that God's grace is extended to a thousand generations; but there where it is associated with "those who love Him" it states that it is extended to thousands of generations (Sotah 31a);
לאהביו are those who do the commandments out of love.
ולשמרי מצותיו are those who do them out of fear.

Verse 10

ומשלם לשנאיו אל פניו AND HE REPAYETH THEM THAT HATE HIM TO THEIR FACE [IN ORDER TO MAKE THEM PERISH] — i.e. during their lifetime (cf. Rashi on Genesis 11:28 s. v. על פני) he repayeth them their good recompense, in order to banish them from the future world (cf. Onkelos).

Verse 11

היום לעשותם [WHICH I COMMANDED THEE] TO-DAY TO DO THEM — to do them to-day, but only in the time to come — in the future world — to receive the reward for them (Eruvin 22a).

Verse 12

והיה עקב תשמעון AND THE CONSEQUENCE WILL BE, IF YE HEARKEN (The Hebrew text may be taken to signify if you will hear the heel, עקב) — If, even the lighter commands which a person usually treads on with his heels (i.e. which a person is inclined to treat lightly), ye will hearken to,
ושמר ה׳ וגו׳ THEN THE LORD [THY GOD] WILL KEEP FOR THEE His promise (Midrash Tanchuma, Eikev 1).

Verse 13

שגר אלפיך means the offspring of thy oxen which the female casts out (שגר) from its womb.
ועשתרות צאנך AND THE BREEDS OF THY FLOCK — Menachem ben Seruk explains this expression to be parallel to אבירי בשן, which means: "the strong rams of Bashan" (Psalms 22:13), i.e. the choicest of the sheep, similar to (Genesis 14:5), "Ashteroth (עשתרות) Karnaim", where also it is an expression for "strength" (so that עשתרות denotes "the strong ones"). Onkelos. however, translates it: "and the flocks of thy sheep". Our Rabbis said: Why is their name called עשתרות? Because they enrich (עשר) their owner (through the sale of their wool, etc.) (cf. Chullin 84b).

Verse 14

עקר means, a man who cannot procreate.

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

כי תאמר בלבבך — You must admit that the word כי here denotes "perhaps": perhaps thou wilt say in thy heart, "Because they are many, I shall be unable to dispossess them". Do not speak thus, לא תירא מהם THOU SHALT NOT BE AFRAID OF THEM. — For it is not possible to explain it in one of the three other meanings of כי so that the words לא תירא מהם will then appropriately fit in with it.

Verse 18

Verse 19

המסות means, THE TRIALS (cf. Rashi on 4:34).
והאתת AND THE SIGNS, for example (Exodus 4:3) "and it became a serpent", and (Exodus 4:9) "It became blood on the dry land"....
והמפתים AND THE WONDERS, viz., the wondrous plagues.
והיה החזקה AND THE STRONG HAND — this refers to the pestilence (Sifrei Bamidbar 115:1; cf. the Passover Haggadah).
והזרע הנטיה AND THE OUTSTRETCHED ARM, this refers to the sword for the smiting of the firstborn (Exodus 4:23).

Verse 20

הצרעה — a species of flying insect which injected poison into them, and castrated them and blinded their eyes wherever they hid themselves (Sotah 36a).

Verse 21

Verse 22

פן תרבה עליך חית השדה LEST THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD INCREASE UPON THEE — But is it not a fact that if people perform the will of the Omnipresent they will not have to fear the beasts, as it is said, (Job 5:23) "And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee"?! But it states this because it was manifest before Him that they would in future sin.

Verse 23

והמם AND HE WILL CONFOUND THEM — This word is vowelled entirely (both syllables) with Kametz, because the last ם is not part of the root, and it is equivalent to וְהָם, "And he will confuse", אותם "them". But in וְהָמַם גלגל עגלתו (Isaiah 28:28) the verb המם consists entirely of root letters, therefore half of it (one syllable) has Kametz and half of it Patach, just like any other verb of three consonants.

Chapter 8

Verse 1

כל המצוה — Explain this in its plain sense: EVERY COMMANDMENT. — And a Midrashic explanation is (taking it to mean, "the whole of the commandment … shall ye be heedful to do"): If thou hast once made a beginning with a meritorious deed, carry it out to the end, because it

bears the name only of him (it is attributed only to him) who does the last part of it, as it is said, (Joshua 24:32) "And the bones of Joseph which the children of Israel brought up from Egypt they buried in Shechem". But did not Moses alone busy himself with them to bring them up (cf. Exodus 13:19)? But because he had no opportunity to complete this (to inter them), the children of Israel completed it, it was called by their name (Midrash Tanchuma, Eikev 6).

Verse 2

התשמר מצותו [THAT HE MIGHT KNOW WHAT WAS IN THY HEART] WHETHER THOU WOULDST KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS — viz., the commandment that ye should not put Him to the test, and that you should not doubt Him (i.e. His ways).

Verse 3

Verse 4

שמלתך לא בלתה THY RAIMENT DID NOT WEAR OUT — the clouds of Divine Glory used to rub the dirt off their clothes and bleach them so that they looked like new white articles, and also, their children, as they grew, their clothes grew with them, just like the clothes (shell) of a snail which grows with it (cf. Shir HaShirim Rabbah 4:11; Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 850).
לא בצקה This means: [AND THY FOOT] DID NOT SWELL like dough (בצק), as is usual with those who walk barefoot — that their feet become swollen.

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

זית שמן (lit., the olive of oil) means, olives that produce oil (i.e. good olives, not hard fruits that give no oil).

Chapter 9

Verse 1

גדלים ועצמים ממך [NATIONS] GREATER AND MIGHTIER THAN THYSELF — Ye are mighty but they are still mightier than you (cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 11:24).

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

אל תאמר בלבבך SAY NOT IN THY HEART, "My righteousness and the wickedness of these nations brought it about that I possess the land;

Verse 5

לא בצדקתך אתה בא לרשת … כי ברשעת הגוים NOT FOR THY RIGHTEOUSNESS … DOST THOU GO TO POSSESS [THEIR LAND], but (כי) for the wickedness of these nations. — Here you have the word כי used in the sense of "but".

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

ואשב בהר — The verb ישב here means only "staying" (not "sitting"; it means: I stayed on the mountain) (Megillah 21a).

Verse 10

לוחת TABLETS — This word is written without a ו before the ת, so that it may be read לוחת (a singular form), to indicate that both of them were alike (Midrash Tanchuma, Eikev 10; cf. Rashi on Exodus 31:18 and Note thereon).

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

ואתנפל לפני ה׳ כראשנה ארבעים יום AND I FELL DOWN BEFORE THE LORD, AS AT THE FIRST, FORTY DAYS, as it is said (Exodus 32:30) “And now I will go up to the Lord, perhaps I may atone [for your sin]”. At that ascent, which was the second I made, I tarried there forty days — consequently these terminated on the twenty-ninth of Ab, since he had ascended on the eighteenth of Tammuz. On that same day in Ab He became reconciled with Israel and said to Moses (Exodus 34:1) “Hew thee out two tablets”. He stayed there another forty days; consequently these terminated on the Day of Atonement (the tenth of Tishri). On that same day, the Holy One, blessed be He, was gladly reconciled (i.e. completely reconciled) with Israel and said to Moses, I have forgiven according to thy word. On this account it was appointed for pardon and forgiveness. And whence do we know that He was reconciled with them with complete goodwill? Because it is stated in respect to the forty days of the last tablets (in respect to third period of forty days) (Deuteronomy 10:10), “And I stayed in the mountain according to the first days”! What was the case with the first days? They were passed in God’s goodwill! (for they had not yet committed the sin of worshipping the golden calf). So, too, the last forty days were in God’s goodwill! You must now say (admit) that the intervening forty days were passed in God’s anger (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 31; cf. Rashi on Exodus 18:13).

Verse 19

Verse 20

ובאהרן התאנף ה׳ AND WITH AARON THE LORD WAS ANGRY, because he listened to you.
להשמידו TO DESTROY HIM — this denotes the extermination of one’s children, and so, too, it states, (Amos 2:9) “And I destroyed (ואשמיד) his fruit (offspring) from above” (Leviticus Rabbah 7:1).
.(אחרי מות) AND I PRAYED FOR AARON ALSO, and my prayer availed to atone half, so that only two of his sons died, and two remained alive.

Verse 21

טחון — This is a present tense of continuous action like הלוך וכלות “going on destroying”; moulant in O. F. English grinding (cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 3:6).

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

ואתנפל וגו׳ AND I FELL DOWN [BEFORE THE LORD … THE FORTY DAYS … WHICH I HAD FALLEN DOWN] — These are the very same forty days mentioned above (v. 18), and it mentions them a second time here, because there is written here (in the next verse) the wording of his prayer, as it is said, "O Lord God, destroy not thy people, etc.".

Chapter 10

Verse 1

בעת ההוא AT THAT TIME — At the end of forty days He was reconciled with me and said to me, פסל לך HEW FOR THYSELF [TWO TABLETS] and afterwards, ועשית לך ארון עץ MAKE THEE AN ARK OF WOOD. I, however, (see v. 3) made the Ark first (Midrash Tanchuma, Eikev 1), because when I came with the tablets in my hand where could I place them? Now this was not the Ark which Bezaleel made for the Tabernacle, because with the Tabernacle they did not occupy themselves until after the Day of Atonement, for only when he came down from the mountain on that day did he give them the command regarding the construction of the Tabernacle, and Bezaleel made the Tabernacle first and afterwards the Ark and the other articles (Berakhot 55a). It follows, therefore, that this was another Ark; and it was this, that went forth with them to battle, whilst that which Bezaleel made went forth to battle only once, in the days of Eli — and they were punished for this, for it was captured by the Philistines (cf. Jerusalem Talmud Shekalim 6:1).

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

ובני ישראל נסעו מבארת בני יעקן מוסרה AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL JOURNEYED FROM BEEROTH OF THE CHILDREN OF JAAKAN TO MOSERA — What has this matter to do with what has been related here? Further: Did they indeed journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan to Mosera; did they not come from Mosera to Beeroth of the children of Jaakan, as it is said, (Numbers 33:31) "And they journeyed from Moseroth, [and they encamped in Bene Jaakan]"? And further: it states here, "There (at Mosera) did Aaron die". But did he not die at Mount Hor? Go and count and you will find that there are eight stations from Mosera to Mount Hor! — But really this also

is part of the reproof offered by Moses. In effect he said, "This, also, ye did: when Aaron died on Mount Hor at the end of forty years and the clouds of Divine Glory departed, ye feared war with the king of Arad and you appointed a leader that ye might return to Egypt, and ye turned backwards eight stages unto Bene Jaakan and hence to Mosera. There the sons of Levi fought with you, and they slew some of you, and you some of them, until they forced you back on the road along which you had retreated. From there (Mosera) ye returned to Gudgodah, — that is identical with Hor Hagidgod (Numbers 33:32).

Verse 7

ומן הגדגדה וגו׳ AND FROM GUDGODAH [TO JOTBATH etc.] — And at Mosera you made a great mourning on account of the death of Aaron which was the cause of this your retreat, and it seemed to you as though he had died there" (Yerushalmi Sotah 1:10 at end; Mekhilta; cf. Midrash Tanchuma חקת and Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 17; see Rashi on Numbers 21:4). — Moses placed this reproof immediately after the mention of the breaking of the tablets to indicate that the death of the righteous is as grievous before the Holy One, blessed be He, as the day on which the tablets were broken, and to tell you that is was displeasing to Him when they said, (Numbers 14:4) "Let us set up a head (another god; see Rashi on that verse) in order to part from Him, as was the day on which they made the golden calf (Leviticus Rabbah 20:12).

Verse 8

בעת ההוא הבדיל ה׳ וגו׳ AT THAT TIME THE LORD SEPARATED [THE TRIBE OF LEVI] — This is to be connected with the former narrative (that which speaks of the tablets of stone, ending at v. 5; vv. 6—8 which contain reference to Aaron's death being interpolated for the reason given by Rashi);
בעת ההוא AT THAT TIME accordingly means: In the first year of the Exodus from Egypt, when ye sinned by worshipping the golden calf, but the sons of Levi did not thus sin. — at that time God separated them from you. It places this verse in juxtaposition with the retreat to Bene Jaakon to tell you that in this matter also, the sons of Levi did not sin, but stood steadfast in their faith.
לשאת את ארון TO BEAR THE ARK — [This was the function of] the Levites (such as were not כהנים).
לעמד לפני ה׳ לשרתו ולברך בשמו TO STAND BEFORE THE LORD, TO MINISTER UNTO HIM AND TO BLESS IN HIS NAME — This (to bless in His Name) was the function of the priests and refers to the "raising of the hands" (a technical term for reciting the priestly benediction which is done with uplifted hands) (Arakhin 11a).

Verse 9

על כן לא היה ללוי חלק WHEREFORE LEVI HATH NO PORTION — because they have been singled out for the service of the altar (v. 8), and therefore were not free to plough and sow.
ה' הוא נחלתו THE LORD IS HIS INHERITANCE — he receives his daily fare ready for him from the King's house (from the Temple; the dues from the sacrifices, etc.).

Verse 10

ואנכי עמדתי בהר AND I REMAINED ON THE MOUNT to receive the last (second) tablets. — Since it does not state above (v. 2) how long he remained on

the mount at this last ascent, he begins again with it (with that incident).
כימים הראשנים AS THE FORMER DAYS — those of the first tablets. How was it with those? They were passed in God's goodwill! So these, too, were passed in God's goodwill. But the intervening forty days when I remained there to pray for you were passed in God's anger (Seder Olam 10; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 9:18).

Verse 11

ויאמר ה' אלי וגו׳ AND THE LORD SPAKE TO ME, [ARISE, GO ON THE JOURNEY BEFORE THE PEOPLE] — Although you had turned away from Him and had sinned by worshipping the golden calf, yet He said to me, (Exodus 32:34) "Go, lead the people".

Verse 12

ועתה ישראל AND NOW, O ISRAEL, [WHAT DOTH THE LORD THY GOD ASK OF THEE] — Although you did all this, yet His mercy and His love are extended over you, and in spite of all that you sinned against Him, He asks nothing of you EXCEPT TO FEAR [THE LORD YOUR GOD, etc.].
כי אם ליראה וגו׳ EXCEPT TO FEAR [THE LORD YOUR GOD, etc.]. — Our Rabbis derived from this ("and now, what does God ask from you") that everything is in the hands of God except the fear of God (Berakhot 33b).

Verse 13

לשמר את מצות ה' TO KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD — and this, too, not unrequited, but לטוב לך FOR THY GOOD — that you should receive a reward for doing so.

Verse 14

הן לה׳ אלהיך BEHOLD, UNTO THE LORD THY GOD BELONGS the whole Universe ("the heavens … and the earth and all that therein is"), and yet רק באבתיך חשק ה׳ ONLY IN THY FATHERS DID THE LORD TAKE PLEASURE.

Verse 15

בכם [AND HE CHOSE …] YOU, even as you see yourselves the object of His pleasure מכל העמים, כיום הזה MORE THAN ALL OTHER PEOPLES THIS DAY.

Verse 16

וערלת לבבכם [YE SHALL CIRCUMCISE] THE FORESKIN OF YOUR HEART — This means: ye shall remove the closure and cover that is on your hearts, [which prevent My words gaining entrance to them] (cf. Rashi on Exodus 6:12 and Leviticus 19:23).

Verse 17

ואדני האדנים [FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD IS …] LORD OF LORDS (i.e. He is Lord over those who are lords, kings, governors, etc.) — so that no lord is able to deliver you from His hand.
לא ישא פנים HE WILL NOT REGARD PERSONS, if you cast off His yoke,
ולא יקח שחד NOR WILL HE TAKE A BRIBE, that one should appease Him by money.

Verse 18

עשה משפט יתום ואלמנה HE EXECUTETH JUDGMENT OF THE FATHERLESS AND THE WIDOW — You have mention of His power (in the preceding verse) and together with His power you find mention of His humility here ("He executeth judgment of the fatherless and the widow") (Megillah 31a).
ואהב גר לתת לו לחם ושמלה AND HE LOVETH THE STRANGER IN GIVING HIM BREAD AND RAIMENT — and this (bread and raiment) is a matter of importance, for the very self of (all the energies of) Jacob, our ancestor, was to pray for this, (Genesis 28:20) "Let Him give me bread to eat and raiment to put on" (Genesis Rabbah 70:5).

Verse 19

כי גרים הייתם [LOVE THE STRANGER] FOR YE WERE STRANGERS — Do not reproach thy fellow man for a fault which is also thine (cf. Rashi on Exodus 22:20; Bava Metzia 59b).

Verse 20

את ה' אלוהיך תירא THOU SHALT FEAR THE LORD THY GOD, and serve Him and cleave to Him; and after you possess all these qualities, then you may swear by His Name (cf. Rashi on 6:13 and Note thereon).

Chapter 11

Verse 1

Verse 2

וידעתם היום AND KNOW YE THIS DAY — Set your heart to know and comprehend, and to accept my reproof.
כי לא את בניכם FOR NOT WITH YOUR CHILDREN am I now speaking who might say, "We do not know nor have we seen all this" (all that God did for you, and what He did to Egypt, and for you in the wilderness, and to Dathan and Abiram, as related in vv. 2—6).

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

בקרב כל ישראל [AND THE EARTH SWALLOWED THEM UP] IN THE MIDST OF ALL ISRAEL — Wherever one of them fled the earth was riven beneath him and swallowed him up. This is the view of R. Judah. Rabbi Nehemiah said to him: But is it not already stated, (Numbers 16:32) "And the earth opened its mouth", and it does not state "its mouths"? Whereupon he (R. Judah) asked him: "But how, then, can I explain the words: "in the midst of all Israel" (if there was but one spot at which they were swallowed up, as

you suggest Scripture states by the word פיה, "its mouth")? He replied to him: you can reconcile the two texts by assuming that the earth became a declivity, — something like a funnel, — and wherever it was that one of them happened to be, he rolled down until he reached the place where the fissure was (cf. Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 752).
ואת כל היקום אשר ברגליהם AND ALL THE SUBSTANCE THAT WAS AT THEIR FEET — This means a man's money, that places him on his feet (Sanhedrin 110a).

Verse 7

כי עיניכם הראת BUT YOUR EYES HAVE SEEN — This is to be connected with the verse mentioned above (v. 2), thus: (2) For not with your children am I speaking who do not know, but with you whose eyes have seen, etc.

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

לא כארץ מצרים הוא [THE LAND WHITHER THOU GOEST …] IS NOT AS THE LAND OF EGYPT, but it is better than it. He mentions Egypt because this assurance was made to Israel on their departure from Egypt, for they said: Perhaps we shall not come to a land as good and beautiful as this. — One might, however, think that Scripture is here speaking to its (the Land's) disparagement, and that he states the following to them: It is not as the land of Egypt — but it is worse than it! It, however, states, (Numbers 13:22; see Rashi thereon) "And Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt etc.". One person built both of them: Ham built Zoan for Mizrajim (Egypt), his son, and Hebron for Canaan, another son. The usual way is that a man first builds the better city, and afterwards builds the inferior one, because what is not good enough for the first he puts into the second, and, besides, the better is usually first. Thus you may learn that Hebron was a finer city than Zoan. Now Egypt is superior to all other lands, for it is stated of it, (Genesis 13:10) "Like the garden of the Lord, viz., like the land of Egypt", and Zoan was the best city in Egypt, because it was the seat of royalty, for thus does it state, (Isaiah 30:4) "For in Zoan were its princes"; Hebron was the worst city in Canaan, — for this reason, indeed, they set it apart for a place of burial, — and yet it was finer than Zoan (cf. Sifrei Devarim 37:1-3). — In the Talmud, Treatise Ketuboth 112a, they derived this in another manner: Is it likely that a man would first build a house for his younger son (here Canaan), and afterwards for his elder son (Mizrajim)? But the meaning of שבע שנים נבנתה וכו׳ is that it (Hebron) was furnished (built up) with all excellencies seven times better than Zoan.
אשר יצאתם משם [THE LAND OF EGYPT] FROM WHICH YE WENT FORTH — even the district of Raamses in which ye dwelt and which was in the best part of the land Egypt, as it is said, (Genesis 47:11) "[And Joseph placed his father and his brethren] in the best part of the land, [in the land of Raamses]" — even that is not as good as the land of Israel (cf. Sifrei Devarim 38:7).
והשקית ברגלך [LIKE THE LAND OF EGYPT] WHICH THOU DIDST WATER WITH THY FOOT — The land of Egypt was such that you had to bring water from the Nile through your foot (i.e. you had to go to the Nile to bring water) to irrigate it — you had to rise from your sleep and to toil. Then again, the lowlying parts alone drank (were irrigated by the Nile) and not the

higher land, and you had to take up water from the lower to the higher parts: but this land (Canaan), למטר השמים תשתה מים DRINKETH WATER OF THE RAIN OF HEAVEN — You may sleep soundly on your beds, and the Holy One, blessed be He, waters both low and high districts, both what is exposed and what is not exposed alike (Sifrei Devarim 38:2).
כגן הירק AS A GARDEN OF HERBS, which has not enough from rain alone, and one has to water it through the foot and shoulder (one has to run about to bring water which one has to carry on one's shoulder).

Verse 11

ארץ הרים ובקעת [THE LAND WHITHER THOU ART PASSING IS] A LAND OF HILLS AND VALLEYS — The mountain is better than the plain because in the plain, in an area that takes a Kor of seed, you can sow only a Kor, but in the mountain the summit of which is an area that takes a Kor, from it you have areas for five Kors of seed: four from its four slopes and one on its summit (Sifrei Devarim 39:3).
ובקעת — these are the plain lands.

Verse 12

אשר ה' אלהיך דרש אתה [A LAND] WHICH THE LORD THY GOD CARETH FOR — But does He not care for all lands, as it said, (Job 38:26) "[Who hath cleft a way for the lightning of the thunder …] to cause rain even on a land where no man is"? But, if one can say so of God, He cares for that land alone, but through the care which He bestows on it, He cares also for all other lands with it (Sifrei Devarim 40:1).
תמיד עיני ה' אלהיך בה THE EYES OF THE LORD THY GOD ARE ALWAYS UPON IT, to see what it requires, and to make new dispensations for it, sometimes for good and sometimes for bad, as is stated in Treatise Rosh Hashanah 17b.
מרשית השנה FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR [TO THE END OF THE YEAR] — At the beginning of the year it is decided by God what will be right up to the end of it (Rosh Hashanah 8a).

Verse 13

והיה אם שמע AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS IF YE WILL HEARKEN — The word והיה is to be connected with what is said above (v. 11): "it drinketh water of the rain of heaven".
שמע תשמעו lit: AND IT WILL COME TO PASS IF HEARKENING YE WILL HEARKEN — If you hearken to the old (if you hear again what you have already learnt, i.e. if you repeatedly study the old lessons), you will hearken to the new (you will the more easily gain new knowledge) (Sukkah 46b; cf. Rashi on Exodus 19:5). Similar is the meaning of אם שכח תשכח (Deuteronomy 8:19): If you have begun to forget, your end will be that you will forget all of it. So, too, is written in a certain Scroll: If thou forgettest Me one day, I will forget thee two days (cf. Sifrei Devarim 48:8; Jerusalem Talmud end of Berakhot).
מצוה אתכם היום [MY COMMANDMENTS WHICH I] COMMAND YOU THIS DAY — This suggests that they should ever be to you as new commandments, as though you had heard them for the first time on that day (Sifrei Devarim 58).
לאהבה את ה׳ TO LOVE THE LORD — This means that you should not say: Well, I will learn, but in order that I may become rich, in order that I may obtain the title Rabbi, in order that I may receive a prize, — but whatever you do, do it out of love for God (Sifrei Devarim 41:23), and ultimately the honour which you desire will certainly come (Nedarim 62a).
ולעבדו בכל לבבכם AND TO SERVE HIM WITH ALL YOUR HEART — i.e. to serve Him with a service that is in the heart: that is prayer, for prayer is termed service (עבודה), as it is said, (Daniel 6:17) "Thy God whom thou servest continually". But was there service (i.e. sacrificial service, the

technical term for which is עבודה) in Babylon? But the term is used because he offered prayer there, as it is said, (Daniel 6:11) "Now his windows were open [in his upper chamber towards Jerusalem and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day and prayed]". And so, too, it states in the case of David (Psalms 141:2): "Let my prayer be set forth as incense before Thee" (incense being part of the sacrificial service) (Sifrei Devarim 41:25-27).
בכל לבבכם ובכל נפשכם [TO LOVE THE LORD] WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL — But has it not already admonished us to love God, by the words (6:5) "[Thou shall love the Lord thy God] with all thy heart and with all thy soul"? But that was an admonition addressed to each and every individual ("with all thy heart"), whilst here it is an admonition addressed to them as a community ("with all your heart") (Sifrei Devarim 41:29).

Verse 14

ונתתי מטר ארצכם I WILL GIVE THE RAIN OF YOUR LAND [IN ITS SEASON] — You will then have done what devolved upon you, I, too, shall do what devolves upon Me (Sifrei Devarim 41:29; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 26:15).
בעתו [RAIN …] IN ITS SEASON — i.e. at night time, so that it may not cause you any trouble. — Another explanation of בעתו IN ITS SEASON is: on Sabbath (Friday) nights when everyone is usually at home (cf. Sifrei Devarim 42:2; Taanit 23a; see Rashi on Leviticus 26:4).
יורה THE FIRST RAIN — This is the rain that falls after the sowing-time, which thoroughly drenches (מרוה) the soil and the seed (Sifrei Devarim 42:4; Taanit 6a).
מלקוש THE LATTER RAIN is the rain that descends just before the harvest time to make the grain full (ripe) on its stalk. The term מלקוש refers to something that is late, just as in the Targum we translate והיה העטפים ללבן (Genesis 30:42; see Rashi thereon) "those born late were Laban's" by לקשיא. — Another explanation: The reason why it is called מלקוש is because it falls at the same period upon the ears (מלילות) and the stalks (קש) (i.e. just before the harvest) (Taanit 6a).
ואספת דגנך AND THOU SHALT GATHER IN THY CORN means: and thou shalt gather it into thy house, and not thy enemies, just as it is said, (Isaiah 62:8—9) "[The Lord hath sworn …], surely I will no more give thy corn [to be food for thine enemies], but they that have gathered it shall eat it"; and not as it is said, (Judges 6:3) "And so it was when Israel had sown that the Midianites came up [and destroyed the produce of the land]" (Sifrei Devarim 42:10).

Verse 15

ונתתי עשב בשדך AND I WILL GIVE GRASS IN THY FIELD [FOR THY CATTLE] in thy field: so that you will not need to lead them to distant pasture grounds. Another explanation: it means that you will be able to cut your grain all the rainy season and cast it before thy cattle as fodder, and if you withdraw your hand from it (stop doing this) only thirty days before the harvest, it will not give you less of its corn than if you had not fed your cattle with it (as is implied by ואכלת ושבעת, you will eat to the full) (Sifrei Devarim 43:2).
ואכלת ושבעת AND THOU SHALT EAT AND BE SATISFIED — This is quite another (a separate) blessing; it means that a blessing will be on the bread within the stomach (see Rashi on Leviticus 25:19). השמרו לכם

Verse 16

TAKE HEED [THAT YOUR HEART MISLEAD YOU NOT] — when you have eaten and are full, take heed to yourselves that you kick not against God; for usually

no man rebels against the Holy One, blessed be He, except out of satiety, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 8:12—14) "Lest thou eat and art full … and thy herds and flocks increase". What is stated after this? "And thy heart be lifted up and thou forget [the Lord thy God]" (Sifrei Devarim 43:7).
וסרתם AND YE TURN ASIDE, to depart from the Torah, and through this, ועבדתם אלהים אחרים YE WILL SERVE OTHER GODS, for so soon as a man departs from the Torah he goes and clings to idol-worship. Similarly did David say, (I Samuel 26:19) "For they have driven me out this day, that I should not cleave to the inheritance of the Lord (the Torah) saying, Go, serve other gods". But who had really said thus to him?! But he meant: Since I am driven out so that I can no longer occupy myself with the Torah, I am nearly exposed to the danger of serving other gods (Sifrei Devarim 43:14).
אלהים אחרים OTHER GODS — i.e. gods that are other (alien) to those who worship them: one calls to it, and it does not answer him; consequently it becomes to him like a stranger (Sifrei Devarim 43:17).

Verse 17

את יבולה [THE GROUND WILL NOT GIVE] ITS יבול — it will not yield even as much as what you have brought (יבול) to it (even the same quantity of seed you have sown in it), just as it is said, (Hag. 1:6) "You sow much, but bring in little" (Sifrei Devarim 43:28; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 26:20).
ואבדתם מהרה AND YE SHALL PERISH QUICKLY — In addition to all the other sufferings I will banish you from the soil which made you sin (Sifrei Devarim 43:29). A parable! It may be compared to the case of a king who sent his son to the banqueting hall and earnestly charged him, "Do not eat more than you need, in order that you may come home clean!" The son, however, took no notice of this; he ate and drank more than he needed, and vomited it up and befouled all the company. They took him by his hands and feet and cast him out of the palace (Sifrei Devarim 43:23).
מהרה [AND YE SHALL PERISH] QUICKLY — I will give you no respite. But if you ask: Was not respite given to the generation of the flood, as it is said, (Genesis 6:3) "His days shall be (i.e. a respite shall be given him for) one hundred and twenty years"? Then I reply: The generation of flood had no one from whom to learn, but you have someone from whom to learn (Sifrei Devarim 43:31).

Verse 18

ושמתם את דברי AND YE SHALL PLACE MY WORDS [UPON YOUR HEART] — Even after you have been banished make yourselves distinctive by means of My commands: lay Tephillin, attach Mezuzoth to your doorposts, so that these shall not be novelties to you when you return. Similarly does it state, (Jeremiah 31:21) "Set thee up distinguishing marks" (Sifrei Devarim 43:34).

Verse 19

לדבר בם [AND YE SHALL TEACH THEM UNTO YOUR CHILDREN,] TO SPEAK OF THEM — From the moment when your son knows how to speak, teach him the text (Deuteronomy 33:4) "Moses commanded us the Torah as a possession of the congregation of Jacob" — so that this should be the means of teaching him to speak (Sukkah 42a). From this they (the Rabbis) derived their teaching: When the babe begins to speak, his father should speak with him in the Holy Tongue, and should instruct him in the Torah. If he does not do this, it is as though he buries him, as it is said here, "And ye shall teach them unto your children to speak of them, etc.",

Verse 20

Verse 21

למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם IN ORDER THAT YOUR DAYS MAY BE INCREASED AND THE DAYS OF YOUR CHILDREN — We may learn from this that if you do so, then they will be increased, but if not, they will not be increased, for the statements of the Torah may be expounded so as to derive from the negative the positive, and from the positive, the negative (Sifrei Devarim 46).
לתת להם [THE LAND WHICH THE LORD SWARE UNTO YOUR FATHERS] TO GIVE TO THEM — It is not written here "to give to you", but "to give to them". From this we are able to derive that the tenet of the "Resurrection of the Dead" is of Biblical origin (more lit., is from the Torah) (Sifrei Devarim 47:2).

Verse 22

שמר תשמרון [IF] YE SHALL DILIGENTLY OBSERVE [ALL THESE COMMANDMENTS] — The repetition of the verb implies an admonition to be very much on one's guard: to be careful in respect to one's study of the Torah that it should not be forgotten (cf. Sifrei Devarim 48:2).
ללכת בכל דרכיו TO WALK IN ALL HIS WAYS — He is merciful, be thou merciful; He bestows lovingkindness, bestow thou lovingkindness (Sifrei Devarim 49:1).
ולדבקה בו AND TO CLEAVE TO HIM — Is it possible to say this? Is He not "a consuming fire" (Deuteronomy 4:24)? But it means: cleave to the scholars and sages, and I will account it unto you as though you cleave to Him (Sifrei Devarim 49:2).

Verse 23

הורישׁ ה׳ THEN THE LORD WILL DRIVE OUT [ALL THESE NATIONS FROM BEFORE YOU] — If you do what devolves upon you, "I" will do what devolves upon Me (Sifrei Devarim 49:3; cf. Rashi on v. 14).
ועצמים מכם [YE SHALL POSSESS NATIONS] MIGHTIER THAN YOURSELVES — You are mighty, but they are mightier than you; for if this does not mean to suggest that the Israelites are mighty, what superiority is it that he ascribes to the Amorites by saying "mightier than yourselves"? But the meaning must be: you are mightier than other nations and they are mightier than you (cf. Sifrei Devarim 50:3).

Verse 24

Verse 25

לא יתיצב איש וגו׳ NO MAN SHALL STAND [BEFORE YOU] — I have here the statement only regarding a man! Whence may I derive that the same applies to a nation or a family or a woman with her witchcraft? Because it states: לא יתיצב, "there shall be no standing before you" — under any circumstances. — If this be so, why does it speak of a man? It means a man, be he even as Og, king of Bashan (Sifrei Devarim 52:1; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 3:11).
פחדם ומוראכם THE DREAD OF YOU AND THE FEAR OF YOU [THE LORD WILL PLACE UPON ALL THE LAND] — Is not, however, פחד the same as מורא? But פחדכם, "the dread of you", refers to peoples near by, and מוראכם, "the fear of

you" to those far away, for פחד denotes "sudden terror", and מורא denotes apprehension enduring for many days (Sifrei Devarim 52:2; cf. Rashi on Sotah 20b and Niddah 71a; see also Rashi on Exodus 15:16 and Note p. 241 there).
כאשר דבר לכם AS HE HATH SAID TO YOU — And where did He say this? In Exodus 23:27: "I will send My terror before thee" (Sifrei Devarim 52:4).

Verse 26

ראה אנכי... ברכה וקללה BEHOLD I [SET BEFORE YOU THIS DAY] A BLESSING AND A CURSE — those which are later to be recited on Mount Gerizim and on Mount Ebal respectively (cf. v. 29).

Verse 27

את הברכה [I SET BEFORE YOU] THE BLESSING — with the condition that you should obey (אשר תשמעו).

Verse 28

מן הדרך אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם היום ללכת וגו׳ [IF YE DEPART] FROM THE WAY WHICH I COMMAND YOU THIS DAY, TO GO [AFTER OTHER GODS] etc. — You thus learn that he who serves idols departs from the entire path of life that Israel has been commanded. From this passage they (the Rabbis) taught the well-known dictum that he who acknowledges the divinity of an idol is as though he denied the Torah in its entirety (Sifrei Devarim 54:4).

Verse 29

ונתת את הברכה THEN THOU SHALT PUT THE BLESSING [UPON MOUNT GERIZIM] — Understand this as the Targum renders it: ית מברכיא those who pronounce the blessing.
על הר גרזים means "towards Mount Gerizim": they (the Levites) turned their faces towards it and began with a formula of blessing: "Blessed be the man that doth not make any graven or molten image etc.". For each of the paragraphs beginning with the expression ארור as set forth in the chapter (Deuteronomy 27), they first recited in a converse form, beginning with the expression ברוך, "Blessed be etc." and only afterwards did they turn their faces towards Mount Ebal and began to recite the corresponding curse (Sifrei Devarim 55:2; Sotah 32a; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 27).

Verse 30

הלא המה ARE THEY NOT [AT THE PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN …]? — He gave geographical indications regarding them (the mountains).
אחרי [AT THE PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN,] AFTER — This means: behind the passage of the Jordan much further on in a distance, for that is the force of the expression אחרי, because wherever the term אחרי (in contradistinction to אחר; cf. Rashi on Genesis 15:1) is used it signifies "greatly separated" (Genesis Rabbah 44:5; cf. Sifrei Devarim 56:1; Sotah 33b).
דרך מבוא השמש [AT THE PASSAGE OF THE JORDAN, FAR DISTANT FROM IT] ON THE WAY OF THE SETTING OF THE SUN — i.e. beyond the Jordan towards the West. The accents in the verse prove that they (the word אחרי and the phrase דרך מבוא השמש) are two unconnected phrases since they bear two separate accents of a different character, viz., the word אחרי is marked by a Pashta (a disjunctive accent), and the word דרך is marked by a משפל (our Yetib), and also has a Dagesh. If, however, אחרי דרך formed one phrase, the word אחרי should be marked by a conjunctive accent, a שופר הפוך (our

Mahpach) and דרך by a Pashta, while the ד of דרך would be ''weak" (i.e. have no Dagesh; cf. Rashi on Joshua 7:15).
מול הגלגל means, distant from Gilgal (not near Gilgal).
אלוני מורה [BESIDE] THE TEREBINTHS OF MOREH — This is Shechem, for it states, (Genesis 12:6): "unto the place of Shechem, unto the terebinth of Moreh" (Sifrei Devarim 56:1; Sotah 33b; cf. Rashi on that verse).

Verse 31

כי אתם עברים את הירדן וגו׳ FOR YE SHALL PASS OVER THE JORDAN etc., — The miracles that will be wrought for you during your crossing of the Jordan shall be an omen for you that you will indeed come into and inherit the land (cf. Sifrei Devarim 57).

Chapter 12

Verse 1

Verse 2

אבד תאבדון YE SHALL UTTERLY DESTROY — Destroy and again destroy! (i.e. utterly destroy). From here we learn that he who eradicates an object of idol-worship must thoroughly uproot it (i.e. remove every trace of it) (Sifrei Devarim 60:1).
את כל המקמות אשר עבדו שם וגו׳ [YE SHALL UTTERLY DESTROY] ALL THE PLACES (according to Rashi: FROM ALL THE PLACES) WHEREIN [THE NATIONS …] SERVED — And what shall ye destroy from them? Their gods which are upon the mountains (Avodah Zarah 45a).

Verse 3

מזבח consists of many stones,
מצבה of one stone only. It is the בימוס, the pedestal for idolatrous statuary, of which we learn in the Mishna (Avodah Zarah 3:7): A stone which one originally hewed for an idol's pedestal is forbidden for use.
אשרה is a tree that had been worshipped (Avodah Zarah 47a).
ואבדתם את שמם AND DESTROY THEIR NAMES by giving them contemptuous nicknames. What they call בית גליא, "a sublime house", you should call בית כריא, "a base house", what they call עין כל, "the universal eye", you call, עין קוץ "the thorn eye" (Avodah Zarah 46a).

Verse 4

לא תעשון כן YE SHALL NOT DO SO [UNTO THE LORD YOUR GOD] — i.e. to burn offerings to God at any place you choose (as do the idolaters, cf. v. 2), but at the place which He will choose (cf. vv. 5—6). — Another explanation is: ונתצתם את מזבחתם … ואבדתם את שמם … לא תעשון כן YE SHALL PULL DOWN THEIR ALTARS … YE SHALL DESTROY THEIR NAMES … BUT YE SHALL NOT DO THIS [TO THE LORD YOUR GOD] — It is a prohibition addressed to one who would blot out the Name of God from any writing, or would pull out a stone from the altar or from the forecourt (cf. Sifrei Devarim 61:12; Makkot 22a). R. Ishmael said: "But can the idea enter your mind that the Israelites would pull down the altars of God?" But the meaning of לא תעשון כן is that you should not do like their doings so that your sins would cause the Sanctuary of (built by) your fathers to be laid waste (Sifrei Devarim 61:7).

Verse 5

לשכנו תדרשו AFTER HIS RESIDENCE SHALL YE INQUIRE — This refers to the Tabernacle at Shiloh. (Sifrei Devarim 62:3)

Verse 6

וזבחיהם AND YOUR SACRIFICES — Obligatory feast-offerings (cf. Sifrei Devarim 63:7)
מעשרתיכם [THERE YOU SHALL BRING] YOUR TITHES — i.e. both the tithe of the cattle and the second tithe, in order to consume them within the wall(cf. Sifrei Devarim 63:8).
תרומת ידכם THE HEAVE-OFFERING OF YOUR HAND — These are the first-fruits of which it is said, (Deuteronomy 26:4) "And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand" (cf. Sifrei Devarim 63:9).
ובכרת בקרכם AND THE FIRSTLINGS OF YOUR HERD — in order to give them to the priest that he may offer them there.

Verse 7

אשר ברכך ה׳ ACCORDING AS THE LORD [YOUR GOD] HAS BLESSED YOU — in accordance with the blessing bring [the offerings of festive rejoicing] (Sifrei Devarim 64:5).

Verse 8

לא תעשון ככל אשר אנחנו עשים וגו׳ YE SHALL NOT DO AFTER ALL [THE THINGS] THAT WE DO [HERE THIS DAY] — This refers back to what is stated above (Deuteronomy 11:31) "for ye shall pass over the Jordan etc.", the meaning being: when ye have crossed the Jordan, you are at once permitted to offer on Bamahs, during all the fourteen years of subjugating and dividing the land amongst the tribes: but on these Bamahs you must not sacrifice all that you sacrifice "here this day", in the Tabernacle that is with you and that has been anointed and is thus fit to offer sin and guilt offerings and vows and free-will offerings on it, whilst on a Bamah only that may be sacrificed which has been made the subject of a vow or a free-will offering. And that is the meaning of כל איש הישר בעיניו, "every man whatsoever is right in his eyes" — vows and free-will offerings which you dedicate because it is pleasing in your eyes to bring them, and not because of an obligation imposed upon you, such may you offer on Bamahs, but not sacrifices that are to be offered in consequence of an obligation (sin and guilt offerings) (Sifrei Devarim 65:4; Zevachim 117b).

Verse 9

כי לא באתם FOR YE SHALL NOT HAVE COME [UNTO THE REST] all those fourteen years of conquering and dividing the land.
עד עתה is the same as "by that time".
אל המנוחה [FOR YE SHALL NOT HAVE COME YET] TO THE REST — This refers to Shiloh (Sifrei Devarim 66:2),
ונחלה [AND TO] THE INHERITANCE — This refers to Jerusalem (Sifrei Devarim 66:2; Zevachim 119a).

Verse 10

ועברתם את הירדן וישבתם בארץ BUT WHEN YE GO OVER THE JORDAN, AND SETTLE IN THE LAND — This means, that ye shall have divided it amongst the tribes and every man knows his portion and the territory of his tribe,

והניח לכם AND WHEN HE GIVETH YOU REST — i.e., after having conquered and divided the land and having obtained rest from the nations "which the Lord left by which to prove Israel" (Judges 3:1) — which was only in the days of David (cf. Sifrei Devarim 68:3) — then,

Verse 11

והיה המקום וגו׳ IT SHALL BE [THAT YE SHALL BRING TO] THE PLACE [WHICH THE LORD YOUR GOD SHALL CHOOSE … EVEN THITHER YE SHALL BRING ALL THAT I COMMAND YOU] — then build the "Chosen House" for yourselves in Jerusalem. And so indeed it states of David, (II Samuel 7:1, 2): "And it came to pass when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies, that the king said unto Nathan the prophet, 'See now, I dwell in the house of cedar, but the Ark of God dwelleth within curtains …'" (Sifrei Devarim 67:3; cf. Rashi on that verse).
שמה תביאו THITHER SHALL YE BRING [ALL THAT I COMMAND YOU] — Above (v. 6) it (the same expression) is said in reference to Shiloh, but here it is said in reference to Jerusalem. It is for the following reason that Scripture divides the matter into two paragraphs: to give permission to offer on a Bamah in the intermediate period between the existence of the one sanctuary and the other; viz., that after Shiloh was destroyed and they came to Nob and erected the Tabernacle there, and then again when Nob was destroyed and they came to Gibeon, sacrificing on the Bamah was allowed until they finally came to Jerusalem (Zevachim 119a and Mishnah Zevachim 14:1).
מבחר נדריכם YOUR CHOICE VOWS — This teaches that one should bring one's offerings from the choicest (Sifrei Devarim 68:4).

Verse 12

Verse 13

השמר לך TAKE HEED TO THYSELF [LEST THOU OFFER THY BURNT OFFERINGS IN EVERY PLACE THAT THOU SEEST] — This negative form of the positive command in v. 11, is stated in order to attach a negative command (לאו) to this matter (Sifrei Devarim 70:1).
בכל מקום אשר תראה IN EVERY PLACE THAT "THOU" SEEST — i.e., that enters thy mind, but thou mayest offer anywhere by the command of a prophet, as, for instance, Elijah did on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:21 ff.) (Sifrei Devarim 70:3).

Verse 14

באחד שבטיך [BUT IN THE PLACE WHICH THE LORD SHALL CHOOSE] IN ONE OF THY TRIBES — namely in the allotment of Benjamin (in whose territory the Temple stood). But above (v. 5) it states, "the place which the Lord … shall choose from all your tribes"? How can this be reconciled with that? In the following manner: when David bought the threshing-floor from Araunah the Jebusite (II Samuel 24:24) to build the Temple thereon, he collected money from all the tribes; however, the threshing-floor itself was situated in the territory of Benjamin (Sifrei Devarim 62:3).

Verse 15

רק בכל אות נפשך HOWEVER [THOU MAYEST SLAUGHTER AND EAT FLESH IN ALL THY GATES] IN EVERY LONGING OF THY SOUL — About what is Scripture here speaking? If you say that it speaks about בשר תאוה (flesh eaten for

satisfying the appetite — an ordinary meal of meat and not a sacrificial meal) and that this verse is intended to permit it to them without offering the fat portions on the altar, behold, it states in another passage (v. 20) "When the Lord thy God shall enlarge thy boundary … and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh, [because thy soul longeth to eat flesh; thou mayest eat flesh in every longing of thy soul]"! About what, then, is this verse speaking? About consecrated animals which had become blemished, — that they must be redeemed and may then be eaten in anyplace (בכל שעריך). One might think that they may be redeemed and thus divested of their holy character also on account of a transitory blemish! Scripture, however, uses the expression רק (which word has a limitative force) (Sifrei Devarim 71:1).
תזבח ואכלת THOU MAYEST SLAUGHTER AND EAT [FLESH] — You have no permission to use their fleece or milk (those of consecrated animals that had become blemished), but only the eating of their flesh after ritual slaughtering is permitted (cf. Sifrei Devarim 71:2-3; Bekhorot 15b).
הטמא והטהור THE UNCLEAN AND THE CLEAN [MAY EAT THEREOF] — Because they (the consecrated animals that had become blemished) came to their present status by virtue of once having been consecrated animals, of which it is stated, (Leviticus 7:19) "And the flesh of offerings that toucheth any unclean thing shall not be eaten", it felt it necessary explicitly to permit in their case that an unclean and a clean person may eat out of the same dish (i.e. together) (cf. Sifrei Devarim 71:7),
כצבי וכאיל AS OF THE GAZELLE AND OF THE HART of which no sacrifice is ever brought.
כצבי וכאיל AS OF THE GAZELLE, AND OF THE HART — These apparently redundant words are intended to exempt them (the פסולי המקדשין שנפדו) from the dues of "the shoulder, the two cheeks and the maw" (Deuteronomy 18:3) which are compulsory gifts to the priests in the case of non-holy (חולין) animals (Chullin 130a; Sifrei Devarim 71:9).

Verse 16

רק הדם לא תאכלו ONLY YE SHALL NOT EAT THE BLOOD — Although I have told you that there is no sprinkling of blood on the altar in its case (it being blemished and thus unfit for the altar), you shall nevertheless not eat it.
תשפכנו כמים YE SHALL POUR IT [UPON THE EARTH] AS WATER — This latter word is intended to tell you that although they are compared to these חיות, yet it (the blood) requires no covering with dust as prescribed in the case of these חיות in Leviticus 17:13 (Sifrei Devarim 71:15; Chullin 84a). Another explanation is that the word כמים is intended to suggest: It is like water in so far as to make seed (food) receptive to uncleanness just as water does (cf. Leviticus 11:38) (Sifrei Devarim 71:15; Chullin 35b).

Verse 17

לא תוכל THOU MAYEST NOT [EAT WITHIN THY GATES THE TITHE OF THY CORN etc.] — Scripture thereby intends to attach to this matter (the eating of מעשר בכור etc. outside the walls of Jerusalem) a negative command also (the positive command being contained in v. 11).
לא תוכל THOU MAYEST NOT (lit., thou canst not) [EAT etc.] — Rabbi Joshua the son of Korcha said: You can, but you are not allowed to (i.e. לא תוכל does not mean: you are unable for some reason or another to do so, but it expresses the inability to do it because of a legal restriction). A similar case we have in (Joshua 15:63) "As to the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out" — they could have done so, but they were not allowed to (Sifrei Devarim 72:1); because Abraham had made a covenant with them when he bought from

them the cave of Machpelah that they would be spared at the conquest of the Land. — As a matter fact they were not Jebusites but Hittites (the people mentioned in Genesis 23 at the purchase of the cave), but they were called Jebusites after the city the name of which was Jebus. Thus is it explained in the Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 36. And this is the meaning of what is stated, that when David was about to drive out the Jebusites, they said to him (II Samuel 5:6) "Except thou take away the blind and the lame [thou shalt not come in hither]" — by "the blind and the lame" they meant the idols (that stood at the gates) upon which they had written the oath which Abraham had taken.
ובכרת בקרך [THOU MAYEST NOT EAT WITHIN THY GATES THE TITHE OF THY CORN …] AND THE FIRSTLINGS OF THY HERD — This, in contradistinction to מעשר דגנך וכו׳, is of course a prohibition addressed to the priests (since the Israelites were not at all permitted to eat firstlings; cf. Zevachim 5:1: הבכור נאכל לכהנים והמעשר לכל אדם).
ותרומת ידך AND THE HEAVE-OFFERINGS OF THY HAND — This refers to the first-fruits (cf. Deuteronomy 26:4) (Sifrei Devarim 72:9; Makkot 17a).

Verse 18

לפני ה׳ [BUT THOU MUST EAT THEM] BEFORE THE LORD — i.e. within the walls of the city of Jerusalem.
והלוי אשר בשעריך [BUT THOU MUST EAT THEM BEFORE THE LORD, THOU …] AND THE LEVITE THAT IS WITHIN THY GATES — If you have nought to give him that is due to him as his portion, as, for instance, the first tithe, give him the "tithe of the poor" (the tithe that replaces the "second tithe" in the 3rd and 6th year of the Sabbatical period); and if you have no "tithe of the poor", invite him to your feast-offering meal (Sifrei Devarim 74:5).

Verse 19

השמר לך TAKE HEED TO THYSELF [LEST THOU FORSAKE THE LEVITE] — This is intended in addition to the positive command expressed in the previous verse, to attach to it (the neglect of the Levite) a negative command, also.
על אדמתך [TAKE HEED TO THYSELF LEST THOU FORSAKE THE LEVITE] UPON THY GROUND — but in exile (outside the Holy Land) you are not admonished as regards him more than as regards the poor of the ordinary Israelites (Sifrei Devarim 74:9; Talmud Yerushalmi Horayot end).

Verse 20

כי ירחיב וגו׳ WHEN [THE LORD THY GOD] SHALL ENLARGE [YOUR BOUNDARY … AND YOU SHALL SAY, I WILL EAT FLESH … YOU MAY EAT FLESH] — The Torah teaches the proper rule of life — that one should not desire to eat flesh unless he lives amidst abundance and wealth (cf. Sifrei Devarim 75:5; Chullin 84a; see also Rashi on Leviticus 17:13).
בכל אות נפשך וגו׳ [YOU MAY EAT FLESH] IN EVERY LONGING OF YOUR SOUL — In the wilderness, however, the flesh of a non-holy animal was forbidden to them as food, unless one first dedicated it to the altar and offered it as a peace-offering (Sifrei Devarim 75:4; Chullin 16b).

Verse 21

כי ירחק ממך המקום IF THE PLACE [WHICH THE LORD THY GOD HAS CHOSEN TO PUT HIS NAME THERE] BE TOO FAR FROM THEE and thou therefore art unable to come and prepare peace-offerings at any time, as thou doest now when the Tabernacle accompanies you,

וזבחת … כאשר צויתך THEN THOU MAYEST SLAUGHTER … AS I HAVE COMMANDED THEE — This teaches us that there was already a commandment regarding the slaughtering of animals — as to how one should slaughter; it is not written in the Torah but it comprises the traditional regulations regarding the slaughter of animals that were given orally (נאמרו) to Moses on Mount Sinai (Sifrei Devarim 75:7; Chullin 28a).

Verse 22

אך כאשר יאכל את הצבי וגו׳ BUT ONLY AS THE GAZELLE [AND THE HART] IS EATEN, [SO THOU SHALT EAT THEM] — i.e. thou art not admonished to eat them in a state of cleanness as is the case with sacrifices which you slaughter in a holy place; if, however, you will argue: How is the case with the gazelle and the hart? Their fat is permitted as food; so, too, is the fat of non-consecrated domestic animals (חולין) permitted! Then I reply: Scripture says אך (which word has a limitative force and thus indicates that חולין are not to be treated like the gazelle and the hart in every respect) (cf. Bekhorot 15a).

Verse 23

רק חזק לבלתי אכל הדם ONLY BE STRONG THAT THOU EAT NOT THE BLOOD — From the fact that it states, "Be strong" (make a special effort), you may learn that they had a prediliction to blood — to the eating of it; it was therefore necessary to state, "be strong". This is the view of R. Judah. R. Simeon, the son of Azzai, however, says: Scripture merely intends to caution you and to teach you to what great an extent you must strive to fulfil the divine commandments in general. If, as regards blood from which one can easily keep aloof since one does not long for it, it felt it necessary to insist on a strong effort on your part when forbidding it to you, how much the more is it necessary for you to make great efforts in keeping other commands [the fulfillment of which requires much moral strength] (cf. Sifrei Devarim 76:1-3).
ולא תאכל הנפש עם הבשר AND THOU MAYEST NOT EAT THE LIFE WITH THE FLESH — This is a prohibition of אבר מן החי, the eating of a limb cut from a living animal (Sifrei Devarim 76:5; Chullin 102a; cf. Rashi on Genesis 9:4).

Verse 24

לא תאכלנו THOU SHALT NOT EAT IT — This is a prohibition against the eating of דם התמצית (the last blood oozing through the cut of a vein: תמצית from מצה "to squeeze") (Keritot 4b).

Verse 25

לא תאכלנו THOU SHALT NOT EAT IT — This is a prohibition against eating of the blood contained in the limbs (Keritot 4b).
למען ייטב לך וגו׳ THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH THEE, etc. — Go and learn how great is the grant of reward for keeping the divine commandments: if in the case of blood for which the soul of man feels a loathing, he who keeps aloof from it obtains merit for himself and for his children after him, how much the more is it so in the case of robbery or forbidden sexual relations for which the soul of man may feel a longing (Makkot 23b).

Verse 26

רק קדשיך ONLY (i.e. however) THY HOLY THINGS [… THOU SHALT BEAR AND GO UNTO THE PLACE WHICH THE LORD SHALL CHOOSE] — This means: although you

are permitted to slaughter non-holy animals I do not permit you to slaughter consecrated animals and to eat them in thy gates (i.e. wherever you please) without sacrificing them on the altar, but bring them to the "House of Choice" (the Sanctuary).

Verse 27

ועשית עלתיך AND THOU SHALT OFFER THY BURNT OFFERINGS — i.e. if they (thy sacrifices) be burnt offerings, put the flesh as well as the blood on the altar, but if they are peace offerings, then "the blood of thy sacrifices shall be poured" first on the altar and afterwards you may eat the flesh. Furthermore did our Rabbis deduce that [the words] "thy sacrifices, however, [thou shalt bear, etc.]" are intended to teach with regard to consecrated animals that are outside the Land (abroad) as well as regards such animals that have been exchanged for other consecrated animals, and finally regarding the young of consecrated animals that [all] such must [also] be offered [in Jerusalem] (Sifrei Devarim 77:1; Bekhorot 14b).

Verse 28

שמר KEEP [AND HEAR (understand) ALL THESE WORDS WHICH I COMMAND THEE] — This (the word שמר) implies the studying of the oral law — that you must keep it within you that it should not be forgotten, just as it is said, (Proverbs 22:18) "[And apply thy heart unto my knowledge] for it is a pleasant thing if thou keep (תשמרם) them within thee", and only if thou learnest is it possible that thou wilt understand and fulfil the commands, but one who is not amongst those who study (lit., who is not included in learning) cannot be amongst those who act correctly (cf. Sifrei Devarim 79:3; see also Rashi on Deuteronomy 4:6). (The translation is: keep, i.e. study and retain your learning in mind: ושמעת, and then thou wilt understand how to observe the commands).
את כל הדברים [KEEP …] ALL WORDS [WHICH I COMMAND THEE] — This implies that a light precept should be as dear to you as a grave precept (Sifrei Devarim 79:4).
הטוב [THAT IT MAY GO WELL WITH THEE … WHEN THOU DOEST] WHAT IS GOOD — This refers to an action that is proper in the eyes of the Heavenly Father.
והישר AND WHAT IS RIGHT — this refers to an action that appears to be proper in the eyes of men (Sifrei Devarim 79:5).

Verse 29

Verse 30

פן תנקש [TAKE HEED TO THYSELF] LEST THOU BE SNARED — Onkelos renders תנקש as an expression of the same root and meaning as מוקש, a snare. But I say that he was not particular to examine carefully the expression, for we never find a נ in the term that means to snare, not even as a root letter that is sometimes omitted from it; but in the term denoting movement from place to place and knocking we do find a נ, as in (Daniel 5:6) "and his knees knocked (נקש) one against the other". Here, too, I say that פן תנקש means lest thou run after them so that you cling to their doings. Similar is (Psalms 109:11) "Let the creditor be מנקש to all that he has" — he (the speaker) is cursing the wicked that he may have many creditors and that these may go about running after his money.
אחרי השמדם מפניך [TAKE HEED THAT THOU BE NOT SNARED] (according to Rashi, THAT THOU DO NOT RUN AFTER THEM) AFTER THAT THEY BE EXTERMINATED BEFORE THEE — The meaning is: after you see that I exterminate them from before

you, you ought to pay attention to why these were exterminated — because of the depraved doings which they practiced. Consequently you should not act likewise lest others come and exterminate you (cf. Sifrei Devarim 81:3).
איכה יעבדו HOW DID [THESE NATIONS] SERVE [THEIR GODS? EVEN SO WILL I DO LIKEWISE] — Because Scripture has laid down a punishment for idolatrous worship only in the case of sacrifice, offering incense, libation and prostration, as it is written (Exodus 22:19), "[He that sacrifices unto any god] save unto the Lord only [shall be doomed to death]" — which thus puts under the death penalty only kinds of worship that are performed in honor of the Most High God (i.e. such as have characteristics similar to "sacrifice"; cf. Rashi on Exodus 22:19), Scripture comes and teaches you here that if the usual way of worshiping any idol is by some other rite, as e.g., that one exposes himself in front of Baal Peor, or casts a stone before Mercury — then this is its cult and one who performs it is therefore liable to the death penalty, but for sacrifice, offering incense, libation and prostration one becomes liable to the death penalty even though this be not the usual way of worshiping it (Sanhedrin 60b).

Verse 31

כי גם את בניהם FOR ALSO THEIR SONS [AND THEIR DAUGHTERS HAVE THEY BURNT IN THE FIRE TO THEIR GOD] — The word גם, "also", is intended to include amongst those they used to burn, their parents also. R. Akiba related, "I once saw a heathen who bound his father before his dog which thereupon devoured him" (Sifrei Devarim 81:6).

Chapter 13

Verse 1

את כל הדבר EVERYTHING [I COMMAND YOU] — light precepts as well as grave ones (Sifrei Devarim 82:1),
תשמרו לעשות OBSERVE TO DO — This statement is intended to attach also a prohibition (לאו) to the positive commands mentioned in this section (Sifrei Devarim 82:2), for wherever השמר is used it is a term that implies a prohibition, but the difference between this and an ordinary prohibition is that flagellation is not inflicted for infringing a prohibition resulting from the use of the term השמר in connection with a positive command.
לא תסף עליו THOU SHALT NOT ADD THERETO — as, for instance, to place five chapters in the Tephillin, to employ five species of fruit and plants in the fulfilment of the command of Lulab, to recite four instead of three blessings in the Benedictions of the priests (Sifrei Devarim 82:4; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 4:2).

Verse 2

ונתן אליך אות [IF THERE ARISE AMONG YOU A PROPHET …] AND GIVETH THEE A SIGN that will show itself in the heavens, just as it is stated in the case of Gideon who spoke to the angel, (Judges 6:17) "[If now I found grace in your sight], then show me a sign (אות)", and then it further states, (Judges 6:39) "[let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece;] let it be dry only upon the fleece [and upon all the ground let there be dew]".
או מופת OR A WONDER showing itself on the earth. — Nevertheless you shall not hearken unto him (although the sign or the wonder come to pass; cf. v. 3). But if you ask, why then does God give him the power to perform a

sign? Scripture replies, (v. 4) "for the Lord your God trieth you, [to know whether you really love the Lord your God]" (Sifrei Devarim 84:1; cf. Sanhedrin 90a).

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

ואת מצותיו תשמורו HIS COMMANDMENTS YE SHALL KEEP — the Law of Moses,
ובקלו תשמעו HIS VOICE YE SHALL OBEY — the voice of the prophets,
ואתו תעבדו HIM YE SHALL SERVE in His Temple (Sifrei Devarim 85:5).
ובו תדבקון AND UNTO HIM YE SHALL CLEAVE — i.e. cleave to His ways: do kindly actions, bury the dead, visit the sick, as did the Holy One, blessed be He (Sotah 14a).

Verse 6

סרה [BECAUSE HE HATH SPOKEN] סרה — i.e. something that is strange in the world (more lit., removed from the world), something which never existed and was never created (a pure invention), and which I never bade him say; detournure in O. F.
והפדך מבית עבדים AND WHO RELEASED YOU OUT OF THE HOUSE OF SERVANTS — even though he had no other claim on you but that He delivered you, it would be sufficient for Him to claim your obedience (Sifrei Devarim 86:5).

Verse 7

כי יסיתך IF [THY BROTHER …] ENTICE THEE — The term יסת always denotes to "stir up", "to incite", as it is said, (I Samuel 26:19) "If it be the Lord that hath stirred thee up (הסיתך) against me" (Sifrei Devarim 87:2); inciter in O. F., Engl, to incite — i.e. that he induces one to act thus.
אחיך THY BROTHER — means, thy brother on the father's side (Sifrei Devarim 87:4).
בן אמך THE SON OF THY MOTHER — i.e., thy brother on the mother's side. (The meaning of the Hebrew words is: thy brother or the son of thy mother) (Sifrei Devarim 87:5).
חיקך [OR THE WIFE OF] THY BOSOM — i.e. who lies on thy bosom and is attached (מחוקה) to you, affichee in O. F. Similar is the expression (Ezekiel 43:14) "and from the bottom (מחיק) upon the ground" — i.e. from the foundation that is sunk in the ground.
אשר כנפשך [OR THY FELLOWMAN] WHO IS AS THINE OWN SOUL — Thus refers to thy father (Sifrei Devarim 87:11). Scripture specially mentions all those who are dear to you — that you must not consent unto them nor spare them (v. 9), how much the less should you consent unto others or spare them.
בסתר [IF THY BROTHER ENTICE THEE] SECRETLY — Scripture speaks of what usually occurs (but does not intend to exclude one who entices people publicly), for usually the words of the enticer are spoken in secret. Similarly does Solomon say of the strange woman that she practises her art of seduction (Proverbs 7:9) "In the twilight, in the evening of the day, in the blackness of night and the darkness" (Sifrei Devarim 87:12).
אשר לא ידעת אתה ואבתיך [LET US GO AND SERVE OTHER GODS] WHICH THOU HAST NOT KNOWN, THOU, NOR THY FATHERS — This would be a great disgrace for you: for not even the heathen nations abandon that which their fathers

have handed down to them, and this man says to you, "Abandon what thy fathers have handed down to you"! (Sifrei Devarim 87:13).

Verse 8

הקרבים אליך או הרחקים [LET US GO AND SERVE OTHER GODS … NAMELY, OF THE GODS] WHICH ARE NIGH UNTO THEE, OR FAR OFF [FROM THEE] — To what end does it (Scripture) mention the gods of the near nations and those of the far-off ones? But this is in effect what Scripture says: From your knowledge of the gods of the near nations, you may draw conclusions regarding the nature of the gods of those far-off; just as there is nothing real in those of the near ones so there is nothing real in those of the far-off ones (Sanhedrin 61b; Sifrei Devarim 88:1).
מקצה הארץ [GODS … FAR OFF FROM THEE] FROM THE ONE END OF THE EARTH [EVEN UNTO THE OTHER END OF THE EARTH] — This refers to the sun, the moon and the host of heaven (the stars) who move from one end of the world to the other (Sifrei Devarim 88:2).

Verse 9

לא תאבה לו THOU SHALT NOT CONSENT UNTO HIM — i.e. thou shalt feel no longing (תאב) towards him, thou shalt show no affection for him (אהב); This is stated because it is said, (Leviticus 19:18) "Thou shalt love thy fellowman as thyself"; this man, however, thou shalt not love (Sifrei Devarim 89:1).
ולא תשמע אליו AND THOU SHALT NOT HEARKEN UNTO HIM when he makes entreaty for his life, that you should forgive him. This is stated because it says. (Exodus 23:5) "[If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee] thou shalt surely help him"; this man, however, thou shalt not help (Sifrei Devarim 89:2).
ולא תחוס עינך עליו NEITHER SHALL THINE EYE SPARE HIM — This is stated because it says, (Leviticus 19:16) "thou shalt not stand against the blood of thy fellow" — this man, however, thou shalt not spare (Sifrei Devarim 89:3).
ולא תחמל NEITHER SHALT THOU PITY [HIM] — i.e. thou shalt not occupy thyself in his favour (you shall not seek to find anything favorable to him) (Sifrei Devarim 89:4).
ולא תכסה עליו AND THOU SHALT NOT CONCEAL (COVER OVER) HIM — If you know anything about him that will condemn him, you are not allowed to keep silent (Sifrei Devarim 89:5).

Verse 10

כי הרג תהרגנו BUT THOU SHALT SURELY KILL HIM — and if he has left the court after having been acquitted have him brought back for condemnation if you know anything against him; if, on the other hand, he has left the court after being found guilty do not bring him back to plead in his favour (Sifrei Devarim 89:6-7).
ידך תהיה בו בראשונה THINE HAND SHALL BE FIRST UPON HIM [TO PUT HIM TO DEATH] — He who was to be seduced to idolatry has the duty to put him to death; if he did not die by his hand he must die by the hands of others, as it goes on to state "and afterwards the hands of all the people" (cf. Sifrei Devarim 89:8).

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

לשבת שם [IF THOU SHALT HEAR SAY IN THE CITIES WHICH THE LORD THY GOD HATH GIVEN THEE] TO ABIDE THERE — The words "to abide there" are added to exclude Jerusalem which city was not intended as a dwelling-place (Sifrei Devarim 92:5; cf. Bava Kamma 82b).
כי תשמע לאמור IF THOU SHALT HEAR … SAYING means, if thou shalt hear people saying thus: "[Certain men, worthless persons,] have gone out" etc.

Verse 14

אנשים CERTAIN MEN — but not women (Sifrei Devarim 93:1).
בני בליעל. WORTHLESS PERSONS — people that have thrown off the yoke of the Omnipresent (the word is taken in the sense of בְּלִי עוֹל, without a yoke) (Sifrei Devarim 93:2).
ישבי עירם THE INHABITANTS OF THEIR CITY — but not the inhabitants of another city (Sifrei Devarim 93:4). From here they (our Rabbis) derived what they said, "A town is not treated as an עיר הנדחת (i.e. does not come under the category of a "condemned city" which according to vv. 16—17 must be utterly destroyed) unless it be men who lead them (the inhabitants) astray, and unless its seducers be of its midst (inhabitants of that city) (Sanhedrin 111b).

Verse 15

ודרשת וחקרת ושאלת היטב THEN SHALT THOU INQUIRE, AND MAKE SEARCH, AND ASK DILIGENTLY — From here — from the variety of expressions denoting inquiry in this verse — they (the Rabbis) derived the law of investigating capital cases by means of seven investigations" (referring to date, time and place). in the following manner: here (in our verse) there occur three expressions relating to inquiry, viz., ודרשת, וחקרת and היטב — the expression ושאלת does not come into account, because from it they derived בדיקות, the examination referring to accompanying circumstances, — and in another passage (Deuteronomy 19:18) it states, "and the judges shall enquire diligently (ודרשו השופטים היטב)", and still in another passage (Deuteronomy 17:40) it states, "and thou shalt inquire diligently (ודרשת היטב)" — thus altogether seven expressions. — And although they are used in connection with different cases they learned by way of analogy (ש"ג) of the term היטב used here and in the passages quoted that it is intended to apply what is stated in one case to the others also (Sanhedrin 40a; cf. Sifrei Devarim 93:6).

Verse 16

הכה תכה THOU SHALT SURELY SMITE [THE INHABITANTS OF THAT CITY] — If you cannot put them to death by the death-penalty prescribed regarding them, kill them in some other way (Sifrei Devarim 94:1; Bava Metzia 31b; cf. Rashi on v. 10).

Verse 17

לה' אלהיך [AND THOU SHALT BURN WITH FIRE THE CITY …] FOR THE LORD THY GOD — i.e. for the honor of His name and for His sake.

Verse 18

למען ישוב ה' מחרון אף THAT THE LORD MAY TURN FROM THE FIERCENESS OF HIS WRATH — for as long as idol-worship exists in the world the fierce wrath of God is kindled against the world (Sifrei Devarim 96:3; Sanhedrin 111b; cf. Rashi on Genesis 9:32).

Chapter 14

Verse 1

לא תתגדדו YE SHALL NOT CUT YOURSELVES — i.e. you shall not make cuttings and incisions in your flesh for the dead in the way the Amorites do (Sifrei Devarim 96:11), because you are children of the Lord and it is therefore becoming for you to be comely and not cut about and with hair torn out.
בין עיניכם [NOR MAKE ANY BALDNESS] BETWEEN YOUR EYES — i.e. adjoining the forehead. In another passage (Leviticus 21:5), however, it states, "They shall not make their head bald"! It, however, intends to make the entire head like between the eyes (בֵּין עֵינַיִם) [i.e., one must not make bald spots on any part of the head]. (Sifrei Devarim 96:13; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 21:5 and Note thereon).

Verse 2

כי עם קדוש אתה FOR THOU ART AN HOLY PEOPLE — You are holy — your actual holiness comes to you from your fathers, but, in addition, ובך בחר ה' THE LORD HAS CHOSEN YOU [so that you are for two reasons bound to keep away from these pagan customs] (cf. Sifrei Devarim 97:1).

Verse 3

כל תועבה [THOU SHALT NOT EAT] ANY ABOMINATION — i.e. anything that I have declared to be an abomination to you (which in itself may not be an abominable thing) — as for instance if one deliberately makes a slit in the ear of a firstborn animal (thus making it unfit for sacrifice) so that one may slaughter it in the country (i.e. outside Jerusalem) and eat it there. Here you have a thing I declared to be an abomination to you, in that I commanded you (Leviticus 22:21) "one shall cause no blemish to be therein". Scripture now comes and teaches you here that one should not slaughter such an animal and eat it, on account of that blemish. Another example: If one boils meat in milk — here you have a thing that I have declared to be an abomination to you (cf. Exodus 23:19; Exodus 34:26; Deuteronomy 14:21), and here it lays down the prohibition about eating it (Chullin 114b).

Verse 4

זאת הבהמה … איל וצבי ויחמור THESE ARE THE BEASTS [WHICH YOU MAY EAT] THE HART AND THE GAZELLE AND THE FALLOW DEER — This (the fact that Scripture begins with זאת הבהמה and goes on to enumerate חיות) teaches us that חיה is included in the term בהמה (Sifrei Devarim 100:1; Chullin 71a; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 11:2, last sentence, and Note thereon). It further teaches us that there are more unclean beasts and wild animals than clean ones, for where two contrasted classes are spoken of it always enumerates by name the individuals of the smaller class (Sifrei Devarim 100:3; Chullin 63a.) (Since it enumerates here the clean animals these must be the minority.)

Verse 5

ואקו AND THE אקו — This is rendered in the Targum by יעלא, the same term as the Hebrew יעל in the expression יעלי טלע (Job 39:1). This is what is called in German 'Steinbock'.
ותאו — This is rendered in the Targum by תורבלא which is the same as תור יער, the ox of the forest (wild ox), for בלא means "forest" in the Aramaic language.

Verse 6

מפרסת means split, as the Targum has it.
פרסה - plante in O. F. (English = hoof).
ושסעת AND HATH CLOVEN [HOOFS] — i.e. hoofs divided into two nails, for there are animals with hoofs split but not entirely divided into two nails (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 9:3), and such are unclean.
בבהמה [AND EVERY BEAST THAT PARTETH THE HOOF …] AMONG THE BEASTS [YE MAY EAT] — if one takes בבהמה to signify "within the animal", it suggests: that which is found in the beast you may eat. From here, therefore, they (the Rabbis) derived the law that a שליל (a fully developed embryo) becomes permitted to be eaten through the slaughter of its mother without requiring ritual slaughtering itself (Chullin 69a; Chullin 74a).

Verse 7

השסועה — (lit., a cleft one) is a certain animal which has two backs and two spinal columns (Chullin 60b). — Our Rabbis asked, "Why are these (the clean and unclean beasts and fowls) here repeated" since the names have already been mentioned in Leviticus XI? They replied: the repetition was necessary so far as quadrupeds are concerned because of the שסועה, and so far as fowls are concerned because of the ראה, both of which are not mentioned in Torath Cohanim (i.e. Leviticus) (Chullin 63b).

Verse 8

ובנבלתם לא תגעו YE SHALL NOT TOUCH THEIR CARRION — Our Rabbis explained that this refers only to the festive seasons when every male Israelite was obliged to appear in the Sanctuary and should therefore be in a state of cleanness. One might think that they (the Israelites, i.e. non-priests) are prohibited from touching a carcass during the whole year! It, however, states, (Leviticus 21:1) in reference to the uncleanness of a corpse: "Say unto the priests … [there shall none be defiled by the dead] etc.". Now you may draw a conclusion a fortiori: How is it in the case of uncleanness caused by a corpse which is a stringent kind of uncleanness? Priests only are prohibited regarding it but ordinary Israelites are not prohibited! Surely in the case of uncleanness caused by a carcass which is less stringent this is all the more so! (Sifra, Shemini, Chapter 4 8-9; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 11:8 and Note thereon).

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

כל צפור טהרה תאכלו ALL CLEAN BIRDS YOU MAY EAT — 'All' — this is intended to permit as food also the bird that is set free in the case of a leper

(i.e. at his purification rite; Leviticus 14:7) (Sifrei Devarim 103:1; Kiddushin 57a).

Verse 12

וזה אשר לא תאכלו מהם BUT THESE ARE THEY WHICH YOU MAY NOT EAT — This again is intended to forbid as food the bird that is slaughtered in the case of a leper (Sifrei Devarim 103:1-2; Kiddushin 57a).

Verse 13

הראה וראיה — ראה and איה and דיה are names for the same bird. Why is it called ראה? Because it sees keenly. And why does Scripture prohibit it under each of its names? In order not to give an opponent occasion to argue, i.e. in order that he who regards it as forbidden may not say, "This is the ראה and is therefore forbidden", and he who wishes to declare it as permitted will then reply, "But this is named דיה", or "this is named איה and this Scripture has not forbidden". — In the case of birds, Scripture enumerates by name the unclean species, thus telling you that the clean birds are more numerous than the unclean (in contradistinction to quadrupeds; see vv. 4—5), for which reason Scripture mentions those by name which form the minority (Chullin 63b).

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

התנשמת — This is the chauve-souris in old French; (English = bat).

Verse 17

שלך is a bird that draws out (שלך = שלה) fish from out the sea (see Rashi on Leviticus 11:17).

Verse 18

דוכיפת is the wild cock, which is called in old French herupe, and which has a double comb (Chullin 63a; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 11:19).

Verse 19

שרץ העוף — These are the lowly creatures which move upon the ground: flies, hornets and the unclean species of grass-hoppers (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 11:20), come under the term of שרץ.

Verse 20

כל עוף תאכלו ALL CLEAN FOWLS, YOU MAY EAT — but not (as is implied by these words) the unclean. Scripture intends, by this statement, to attach to the negative command which forbids unclean fowls (v. 12), a positive one which implicitly contains a prohibition. And similarly, when in the case of clean cattle it states, (v. 6) "that you may eat", it implies: not, however, the unclean ones. Now a prohibition which is not plainly expressed but can only be drawn by inference from a positive command, is

itself regarded only as a positive command, so that one who eats such food transgresses thereby not two negative commands, but a positive and a negative command (Sifrei Devarim 101:10; and cf. Rashi on Leviticus 11:3).

Verse 21

לגר אשר בשעריך [YE SHALL NOT EAT ANY CARRION: THOU SHALT GIVE IT] UNTO THE STRANGER THAT IS IN THY GATES — i.e. unto a stranger that is a sojourner (גר תושב) — one who has undertaken not to worship idols (i.e. one who has been converted to the fundamental tenet of Judaism) but who eats carrion (does not obey the other teachings of the Torah) (Sifrei Devarim 104:2; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 25:35).
כי עם קדוש אתה לה׳ FOR THOU ART AN HOLY PEOPLE UNTO THE LORD — This implies: show yourself holy (abstinent) in respect to things which are permitted to you — i.e. things that are actually permitted but which some treat as forbidden you should not treat as permissible in their presence (Sifrei Devarim 104:7).
לא תבשל גדי THOU SHALT NOT SEETHE A KID [IN ITS MOTHER'S MILK] — Three times the prohibition of seething meat in milk is mentioned in the Torah (here, and in Exodus 23:19 and Exodus 34:26) and each time in the form: "thou shalt not seethe a kid" thus excluding three species: a wild beast, fowls and unclean beasts from the prohibition (Sifrei Devarim 104:8; Chullin 113a).

Verse 22

THOU SHALT TRULY TITHE [ALL THE INCREASE OF THY SEED] — What has this matter to do with that? (Why are they placed in juxtaposition)? But the Holy One, blessed be He, says in effect to Israel: "Do not compel Me to blast by heat the tender kernels of the grain, whilst they are yet in their mother's womb (i.e. in the husks), for if you do not tithe your products as is proper, when they are near ripening I shall bring forth the east wind and it will blast them", as it is said, (2 Kings 19:26) "[Therefore … they were] as the corn blasted before it be grown up" (Midrash Tanchuma, Re'eh 17). A similar reason may be given for בכורים (for its juxtaposition to לא תבשל גדי (Exodus 34:26).
שנה שנה [THOU SHALT TRULY GIVE TITHE] YEAR BY YEAR — From here we may derive that one must not give tithe from the new grain for the old (Sifrei Devarim 105:1).

Verse 23

ואכלת וגו׳ AND THOU SHALT EAT [BEFORE THE LORD THY GOD, IN THE PLACE WHICH HE SHALL CHOOSE … THE TITHE OF THY CORN etc.] — This is the "Second Tithe", for it (Scripture) has already taught us to give the "First Tithe" to the Levites — as it is said, (Numbers 18:26) "[And unto the Levite shalt thou speak …], when ye take of the children of Israel the tithes", etc., — and besides it gave them permission to eat it in any place, as it is said, (Numbers 18:31) "and ye shall eat it in any place" — thus you must admit that this tithe mentioned here, (which is to be eaten by an ordinary Israelite in Jerusalem) must be another one, — the "Second Tithe".

Verse 24

כי יברכך WHEN [THE LORD THY GOD] HATH BLESSED THEE — so that your produce will be too much to carry [as far as Jerusalem].

Verse 25

Verse 26

בכל אשר תאוה נפשך [AND THOU SHALT GIVE THAT MONEY] FOR WHATSOEVER THY SOUL LONGETH AFTER — this is a general statement,
בבקר ובצאן וביין ובשכר FOR ANY OF THE HERD, OR ANY OF THE FLOCK, OR FOR WINE, OR FOR STRONG DRINK — this is a particularisation,
ובכל אשר תאוה נפשך OR FOR WHATEVER THY SOUL DESIRES — Scripture again includes them in a general statement. [The rule is that when a verse expresses a כְּלָל, a פְּרָט, and then a כְּלָל again, as in this case, we apply the characteristics of the פְּרָט to the whole matter. Therefore,] just as the particulars mentioned have the characteristic of being products (ולד) of things themselves produced by the earth during the week of Creation, and are fitted to be food for man, etc. [So, too, the money must be expended only on things of this character] (Eruvin 27b).

Verse 27

והלוי … לא תעזבנו AND THE LEVITE [THAT IS WITHIN THY GATES;] THOU SHALT NOT FORSAKE HIM by not giving him the "First Tithe" (מעשר ראשון).
כי אין לו חלק ונחלה עמך OR HE HATH NO PORTION NOR INHERITANCE WITH THEE — This excludes "Gleanings" (לקט), "the forgotten sheaf" (שכחה), the "corner of the field" (פאה), and ownerless things (הפקר) from the things that must be tithed — for he (the Levite) has a portion in them (is entitled to take of them) with you, just the same as you, and they are therefore exempt from tithes (Mishnah Challah 1:3; Bava Kamma 94a).

Verse 28

מקצה שלש שנים AT THE END OF THREE YEARS [THOU SHALT BRING FORTH ALL THE TITHE OF THY INCREASE THE SAME YEAR] — Scripture hereby intends to teach you that if one has delayed to give his tithes of the first and the second year of the Sabbatical period, he has to remove them from his house in the third year.

Verse 29

ובא הלוי AND THE LEVITE SHALL COME and take the "First Tithe" which you have failed to give him,
והגר והיתום AND THE STRANGER AND THE FATHERLESS [SHALL COME] and take the "Second Tithe", which belongs to the poor in that year, and you shall not eat it yourself in Jerusalem, as you were bound to eat the "Second Tithe" of the first two years,
ואכלו ושבעו AND THEY SHALL EAT AND BE SATISFIED — Give them sufficient to satisfy them. From here they (the Rabbis) derived the law: one must give the poor in the barn no less than half a kab of wheat or a kab of barley (Sifrei Devarim 110:3). As for you, go up to Jerusalem with the tithe (i.e. מעשר שני) of the first and the second years which thou hast delayed, and make the confession there: "I have removed the hallowed things from the house" — as it is stated in the section beginning with the words כי תכלה לעשר (Deuteronomy 26:12).

Chapter 15

Verse 1

מקץ שבע שנים AT THE END OF SEVEN YEARS [THOU SHALT MAKE A REMISSION] — One might think that this means seven years after each individual loan! Scripture, however, states, (v. 9) "[Take heed unto thyself lest there be in thy heart a word of worthlessness, saying], The seventh year … approacheth [and thine eye be evil against thy brother and thou givest him nought]"! Now, if you say that the seven years spoken of here mean seven years after each individual loan, i.e., after the granting of the loan to each individual person, how can one say, at the time the request for a loan is being made, "it (the seventh year) is coming near?" Consequently you must learn from this that Scripture means seven years according to the reckoning of the Sh'mitta-period (Sifrei Devarim 111:8).

Verse 2

שמוט כל בעל משה ידו means as much as שמוט את ידו של כל בעל משה THERE SHALL BE A RELAXING OF THE HAND OF EVERY CREDITOR.

Verse 3

את הנכרי תגוש OF ANY ALIEN THOU MAYEST EXACT IT AGAIN — This implies a positive command (Sifrei Devarim 113:1).

Verse 4

אפס כי לא יהיה בך אביון HOWBEIT THERE SHALL BE NO NEEDY AMONG YOU — But further on (v. 11) it states, "For the needy shall never cease out of the land"! But the explanation is: When you do the will of the Omnipresent the needy will be amongst the others and not amongst you, if, however, you do not the will of the Omnipresent, the needy will be amongst you (Sifrei Devarim 114:1).
אביון denotes a person who is more destitute than an עני. The term אביון (from the root אבה "to long for", "to desire"; cf. Rashi on Exodus 23:6) denotes one who longs for everything (because he lacks everything) (Leviticus Rabbah 34:6).

Verse 5

רק אם שמוע תשמע ONLY IF THOU WILT CAREFULLY HEARKEN [UNTO THE VOICE OF THE LORD THY GOD] — then לא יהיה בך אביון THERE SHALL BE NO NEEDY AMONGST YOU.
שמוע תשמע [IF] THOU WILT CAREFULLY HEARKEN — The repetition of the verbal form suggests: If one listens a little (if one shows the determination to obey) he is caused to listen to many things (he gradually becomes obedient to every divine command) (Sifrei Devarim 115:1; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 11:13).

Verse 6

כאשר דבר לך [FOR THE LORD GOD BLESSETH THEE] AS HE PROMISED THEE — and where did He promise you this? In the statement, (Deuteronomy 28:3—12) "Blessed shalt thou be in the city, etc." (Sifrei Devarim 116:1).
והעבטת AND THOU SHALT LEND ON PLEDGE — In the case of every term that denotes transacting a loan when it refers to the lender, the Hiphil form is appropriate to it (to cause a person to do something: here, "you will make many people to be borrowers" i.e. you will lend to them), as for instance, והלוית ,והעבטת; while if it stated וְעָבַטְתָּ (in the Kal), it would apply to the borrower, meaning "thou wilt borrow on pledge", the same as ולוית ("and thou will borrow", which in Kal refers to the borrower).
והעבטת גוים AND THOU SHALT LEND ON PLEDGE UNTO [MANY] NATIONS — One might think that you might do this in that you will borrow from one nation and

lend to another! Scripture, however, states, "but you shall not borrow" (Sifrei Devarim 116:2).
ומשלת בגוים רבים AND THOU SHALT RULE OVER MANY NATIONS — One might think that at the very same time other nations will be ruling over you! Scripture, however, states, "but they shall not rule over you (Sifrei Devarim 116:3).

Verse 7

כי יהיה בך אביון IF THERE BE AMONG YOU A NEEDY MAN — The most needy has preference (Sifrei Devarim 116:4);
מאחד אחיך ONE OF THY BRETHREN — thy brother on thy fathers side has preference over thy brother on thy mother's side (Sifrei Devarim 116:5);
שעריך [WITHIN ANY OF] THY GATES — this implies that the poor of thine own city have preference over the poor of another city (Sifrei Devarim 116:6; cf. Rashi on Exodus 22:24).
לא תאמץ THOU SHALT NOT MAKE [THY HEART] OBSTINATE — There are people who painfully deliberate whether they should give or not, therefore Scripture states, "thou shalt not make thy heart obstinate"; there again are people who stretch their hand forth (show readiness to give) but then close it, therefore it is written, "thou shalt not close thine hand" (Sifrei Devarim 116:10-11).
מאחיך מאביון [NOR CLOSE THINE HAND] FROM THY NEEDY BROTHER — If you will not give him you will become in the end a brother of the needy (become as needy as himself) (cf. Sifrei Devarim 116:12).

Verse 8

פתח תפתח [BUT] THOU SHALT SURELY OPEN [THINE HAND] — even many times (Sifrei Devarim 116:13).
כי פתח תפתח BUT THOU SHALT SURELY OPEN [THINE HAND] — Here, you see, the word כי has the meaning of "but" (whilst e.g.. in v. 7 it means "if", in v. 10 "because").
והעבט תעביטנו AND THOU SHALT LEND HIM ON PLEDGE — If he does not want a gift, give it to him as a loan (cf. Sifrei Devarim 116:14; Ketubot 67b).
די מחסרו [LEND HIM ON PLEDGE] SUFFICIENT FOR HIS NEED — but you are not commanded to make him rich.
אשר יחסר לו [SUFFICIENT FOR HIS NEED] IN THAT WHICH HE LACKETH — This implies: you must provide him even with a horse to ride on and a slave to run before him (if he was accustomed to such and now feels the lack of them) (Sifrei Devarim 116:16; Ketubot 67b).
לו — implies that you must help him even to get a wife; for so it states. אעשה לו עזר כנגדו "I will make a helpmate for him (לו)" (Sifrei Devarim 116:17; Ketubot 67b).

Verse 9

וקרא עליך AND HE CRY [UNTO THE LORD] AGAINST THEE — One might think this is a command ("he shall call against thee"). Scripture, however, states, (Deuteronomy 24:15) "[At his day thou shalt give him his hire … he is poor], so that he may not call against thee [unto the Lord]" (Sifrei Devarim 117:5).
והיה בך חטא AND IT BE SIN UNTO THEE — under any circumstances, even if he does not cry against thee. But if this be so, to what end is it written "and he cry against thee"? It suggests that I will make greater haste to punish thee because of him who cries, than because of one who does not cry (Sifrei Devarim 117:5).

Verse 10

נתן תתן לו THOU SHALT SURELY GIVE HIM — even hundred times (Sifrei Devarim 117:6).
לו implies between him and you (privately) (Sifrei Devarim 117:7.)
כי בגלל הדבר הזה BECAUSE THAT FOR THIS THING [THE LORD THY GOD SHALL BLESS THEE] — (the word is taken in its literal sense of "word", for it would have sufficed to state כי בגלל זה suggesting): even if you only say (intend) to give but are later unable to do so you will receive a reward for the mere saying (intention) together with the reward for the action (Sifrei Devarim 117:8).

Verse 11

על כן means מפני כן BECAUSE OF THIS.
לאמר suggests: I give you good advice for your own benefit (Sifrei Devarim 118:2).
לאחיך לעניך [THOU SHALT SURELY OPEN THINE HAND] UNTO THY BROTHER, TO THY POOR — open thine hand to thy brother, to which brother? To the poor one. לעניך written with one Jod denotes one poor man, but עניך with two Jods denotes two (or many) poor, i.e. it is a plural form.

Verse 12

כי ימכר לך IF [THY BROTHER …] BE SOLD UNTO THEE by others (not one that sells himself as a servant on account of his destitution, of which case Scripture deals in Leviticus 25:46 ff); Scripture is speaking of one whom the court has sold for a theft that he has committed. But has it not already been stated. (Exodus 21:2) "If thou buyest an Hebrew servant" and there, too, Scripture speaks of one whom the court has sold (as proved by Rashi in his comment on that verse; Mekhilta)?!. But the repetition was necessary because of two new points that are stated here: the one is that it is here written "or an Hebrew woman", that she, too, like a man-servant, goes free at the end of six years of servitude — it does not mean a woman whom the court had sold, for a woman cannot be sold by the court on account of a theft committed by her, since it states, (Exodus 22:2) that the thief shall be sold "for his theft" which implies: he for his theft, but not she for her theft (Sotah 23b); — but what Scripture is speaking of here is of a woman under age whom her father has sold as a handmaid, and it teaches you here that if six years of servitude terminate before the time that she shows signs of incipient puberty she goes free. And further it mentions a new point here, viz., "thou shalt furnish him (or her) liberally" (cf. Rashi on Exodus 30:4).

Verse 13

Verse 14

העניק תעניק THOU SHALT FURNISH HIM LIBERALLY — The noun from the root ענק denotes an ornament worn high up on the body which thus easily comes within sight of the eye (i.e. is conspicuous), (cf. ענק, a giant, someone who towers on high) — i.e. you shall furnish him with something that will make it patent that you have been kind to him. There are some who explain the word העניק to mean loading on his (the servant's) neck.
מצאנך מגרנך ומיקבך [THOU SHALT FURNISH HIM LIBERALLY] OUT OF THY FLOCK, AND OUT OF THY FLOOR, AND OUT OF THY WINE PRESS — One might think I have this duty in respect to these things only! Scripture, however, states "that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee [shalt thou give him]" implying, of all with which thy Creator hath blessed thee. Why, then, are these alone specifically mentioned? To teach you the following: How is it

with these things? They have the characteristic that they come under the term of "blessing", (i.e. they possess the power of propagating) so, too, you are obliged to furnish him only with such things that come under the term "blessing", thus excluding mules, (because they are sterile) (Sifrei Devarim 119:3; Kiddushin 17a). — Our Rabbis have derived in Treatise Kiddushin 17a by reasoning from the analogous expressions found in certain texts (ש"גז) what quantities one must give him of all the different kinds here mentioned.

Verse 15

וזכרת כי עבד היית AND THOU SHALT REMEMBER THAT THOU WAST A SERVANT [IN THE LAND OF EGYPT] — and I loaded thee with good things, and did so a second time — from the spoil of the land of Egypt and from the spoil at the Red Sea; so you, too, load him once, and do it again for him (Sifrei Devarim 120:1).

Verse 16

Verse 17

עבד עולם [AND HE SHALL BE THY] SERVANT עולם — One might think that עולם has here its usual meaning: for ever! Scripture, however, states, (Leviticus 25:10) "[And ye shall sanctify the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof] and ye shall return every man unto his family". Consequently, you learn that it (what Scripture terms here עולם), can only mean the period until the termination of that Jubilee cycle (Mekhilta; cf. Rashi on that verse), ואף לאמתך תעשה כן AND ALSO UNTO THY MAID SERVANT THOU SHALT DO LIKEWISE — i.e. furnish her out of thy property. One might think, however, that Scripture puts her on the same level with the man-servant concerning the piercing of the ear too! It however, states, (Exodus 21:5) "And if the man-servant (העבד) shall plainly say, [I love my lord … then … his lord shall bore his ear through with an awl]" — so you see that a man-servant must have his ear pierced, but a maid-servant does not have it pierced (Sifrei Devarim 122:6).

Verse 18

כי משנה שכר שכיר [IT SHALL NOT SEEM HARD UNTO THEE WHEN THOU LETTEST HIM GO FREE …] FOR [HE HATH BEEN WORTH] A DOUBLE HIRED SERVANT [UNTO THEE] — From here they (the Rabbis) derived the law that a Hebrew servant has to do service both by day and by night, and that is double as much as the labor of a man hired for day work only. And what is his service during the night? That his master gives him a Canaanite maid-servant with the object of raising children, and the children belong to the master (Sifrei Devarim 123:1; Kiddushin 15a).

Verse 19

כל הבכור... תקדיש ALL THE FIRSTLING MALES … THOU SHALT SANCTIFY [UNTO THE LORD] — But in another passage (Leviticus 27:26) it states, "[Only the firstborn of the beasts …] one shall not sanctify it"? How can these be reconciled? The latter passage means: he must not dedicate it as a different sacrifice (i.e. offer it as an עולה or שלמים instead of as a בכור), whilst here it teaches that it is a duty to say: "Thou art holy as a firstborn!" Another comment is: It is impossible to say that "thou shalt sanctify" is to be taken literally, for it already states in

another passage "one shall not sanctify it"; it is, on the other hand, also impossible to take "one shall not sanctify it" literally, since it states "thou shalt sanctify it". How can these be reconciled? In the following manner: by taking תקדיש in our verse to imply: "thou mayest dedicate" so far as the dedication of its value (הקדש עלוי) is concerned, and then he must give a sum corresponding to the טובת הנאה in it to the Temple treasury, but you must not dedicate it as far as the altar is concerned (i.e. dedicate it as any sacrifice other than as a בכור) (Arakhin 29a: cf. Sifrei Devarim 124:4).
לא תעבד בבכור שורך ולא תגז וגו׳ THOU SHALT NOT WORK WITH THE FIRSTLING OF THY HERD, NOR SHEAR [THE FIRSTLING OF THY FLOCK] — The converse case also (working with the firstborn sheep and using the hair of the firstborn calf) have our Rabbis derived to be forbidden, but Scripture merely speaks of what usually occurs (Sifrei Devarim 124:6; Bekhorot 25a).

Verse 20

לפני ה׳ אלהיך תאכלנה THOU SHALT EAT IT BEFORE THE LORD THY GOD — Scripture is speaking to the priest (not to the owner to whom תקדיש in the previous verse refers), for we find already stated that it (the בכור) is one of the dues of the priests whether it is unblemished (and its blood and fat portions are to be sacrificed on the altar and the flesh eaten by the priests), or whether it is blemished (when it must not be offered on the altar), for it states, (Numbers 18:18) "and the flesh of them (the firstborn animals, both the blemished and the unblemished) shall be thine" (the priest's) (cf. Bekhorot 28a).
שנה בשנה [THOU SHALT EAT IT BEFORE THE LORD …] YEAR BY YEAR — From here we derive the law that one should not defer it (i.e. sacrificing and eating it) beyond its first year (Bekhorot 28a). If so, one might think that it becomes invalid as a sacrifice as soon as its first year has passed! This is not the case, for it has been put in comparison with the second tithe, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 14:23; cf. Rashi on that verse): "and thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds, and thy flocks". How is it in the case of the second tithe? It does not become invalid if left over from one year to the other (cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 14:28 and 29), so, too, does the firstborn animal not become invalid under the same circumstances, only that it is a meritorious act to offer and consume it within its first year.
שנה בשנה (may also be translated A YEAR WITH ANOTHER YEAR) — If one slaughtered it at the end of its first year (an the last day) he may eat it that day and the first day of the next year. This teaches us that it (a firstborn animal) may in all cases be eaten on two successive days and the intervening night (cf. Sifrei Devarim 125; Bekhorot 27b).

Verse 21

מום [AND IF THERE BE] ANY BLEMISH [THEREIN, IF IT BE LAME, OR BLIND, OR HAVE ANY ILL BLEMISH, THOU SHALT NOT SACRIFICE IT …] — any blemish is a general statement,
פסח או עור LAME OR BLIND is a particularization,
כל מום רע ANY ILL BLEMISH — it again comprises them in a general statement. How is it with the blemishes particularised? They have the characteristic that each is a visible (external) blemish and the animal never returns naturally to its original condition (i.e. never becomes free from the blemish). So, too, the general statement includes all such blemishes that are visible and incurable [while in the case of a transitory blemish the animal may be sacrificed when the blemish has disappeared] (Bekhorot 37a; cf. Sifrei Devarim 126:2).

Verse 22

Verse 23

רק את דמו לא תאכל ONLY THOU SHALT NOT EAT THE BLOOD THEREOF — This prohibition appears to be redundant, since the blood of no animal may be eaten, but it is mentioned, in order that you should not think: since it (the blemished firstborn animal) is something that in every respect is permitted originally it belonged to a forbidden class of animals — for, you see, it was holy and yet it may be slaughtered outside the Temple, and may be eaten without redemption — and consequently you might think that its blood is also permitted, Scripture therefore states, "However thou shalt not eat its blood".

Chapter 16

Verse 1

שמור את חדש האביב WATCH THE MONTH OF ABIB — This means: Before it comes watch whether it will be capable of producing ripe ears (אביב), so that one may offer the Omer meal-offering during it, and if not (i.e. if you observe that the ears will not be ripe by the 16th of Nisan), then intercalate the year (i.e. add a month to the winter-period, so that the month Abib falls later than it otherwise would, by which time the ears will be ripened) (cf. Sanhedrin 11b and Note 4 on p. 191 of Leviticus in the Silbermann edition of the Pentateuch).
ממצרים לילה [FOR IN THE MONTH OF ABIB THE LORD THY GOD BROUGHT THEE FORTH] FROM EGYPT BY NIGHT — But did they not go forth by day, as it is said, (Numbers 30:3) "on the morrow after the Passover the children of Israel went out … [in the sight of all the Egyptians]"? But it states that they went out by night because Pharaoh gave them permission to go forth by night, as it is said, (Exodus 12:31) "And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, [and said, Rise up, go forth from among my people etc.]" (cf. Sifrei Devarim 128:5; Berakhot 9a).

Verse 2

וזבחת פסח לה' אלהיך צאן THOU SHALT THEREFORE SACRIFICE THE PASSOVER UNTO THE LORD THY GOD OF SHEEP, as it is said of the Passover offering, (Exodus 12:5) "Ye shall take it from the sheep or from the goats",
ובקר — AND OXEN thou shalt slaughter as the חגיגה (the festival offering sacrificed on the fourteenth of Nisan in addition to the Passover offering); for if they have counted themselves (formed themselves) into too large a company for the Passover offering (so that one lamb will not suffice for them) they bring together with it a festival offering and this is eaten first, in order that it (the Passover sacrifice) can be eaten in satiety (i.e. after the appetite is satisfied; cf. Pesachim 69b, 70a). — And besides this our Rabbis derived many Halachic matters from this verse (cf. Sifrei Devarim 129; Berakhot 9a).

Verse 3

לחם עני THE BREAD OF AFFLICTION — i.e. bread that calls to mind the affliction to which they were subjected in Egypt (Sifrei Devarim 130:5).
כי בחפזון יצאת FOR THOU CAMEST FORTH [FROM THE LAND OF EGYPT] IN HASTE, and the dough therefore had no time to become leavened, and this (the

eating of unleavened bread) shall be unto you as reminder of this. The haste, spoken of here, was not on thy part, but on Egypt's part, for so it states, (Exodus 12:33) "And Egypt was urgent upon the people [hastening to send them out of the land]" (Sifrei Devarim 130:6; cf. Berakhot 9a).
למען תזכר THAT THOU MAYEST REMEMBER through the eating of the Passover sacrifice and the unleavened bread, את יום צאתך THE DAY WHEN THOU CAMEST FORTH [OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT].

Verse 4

ולא ילין מן הבשר אשר תזבח בערב ביום הראשון לבקר NEITHER SHALL ANY OF THE FLESH, WHICH THOU HAST SACRIFIED THE FIRST DAY AT EVEN, REMAIN ALL NIGHT UNTIL THE MORNING — This is a prohibition addressed to one who might, in the case of the Passover sacrifice offered in later generations (i.e. after the first that was offered in Egypt), leave over night any of its flesh. And it was necessary to state this because so far it has been mentioned only with regard to that one Passover sacrifice that was offered in Egypt (פסח מצרים) (Exodus 22:10). — The "first day" spoken of here is the fourteenth day of Nisan (not the, fifteenth which is the first day of the Festival), just as you must explain that term in the passage (Exodus 22:15): "even the first day (ביום הראשון) ye shall put away leaven out of your houses" (cf. Rashi on that verse). — And because Scripture has digressed from the subject of the Passover Sacrifice with which this section begins and has begun to speak of the ordinances relating to the seven days of the festival, as, for instance, (v. 3) "seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread therewith", and (v. 4) "and there shall be no leaven seen with thee in all thy boundaries [seven days]", it was compelled to specify with regard to which offering it states the prohibition of leaving the flesh over night. For if it had written only "neither shall any of the flesh which thou sacrificedst at even (not mentioning ביום הראשון) remain all night until the morning", I might have thought that the peace offerings which are slaughtered during all the seven days all come under the prohibition of "and thou shalt not leave any of it until the morning" (Exodus 22:12), and may therefore be eaten one day and the following night only (which is not so); therefore it wrote "[neither shall any of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst] at even on the first day [remain all night]". — Another explanation is that Scripture speaks here of the festival offering brought on the fourteenth of Nisan (חגיגת י"ד, not of the קרבן פסח) and that it teaches with reference to it that it may be eaten during two successive days and the intervening night (cf. however, Rashi on Exodus 7:14 and Note 2 thereon). As regards the first day" that is mentioned here — according to this explanation — Scripture is speaking of the first day of the festival (the fifteenth of Nisan), and what the verse implies is the following: None of the flesh of the festival offering which you slaughtered at even (i.e. towards eventide on the fourteenth of Nisan) shall remain on the first day of the festival until the morning of the second day of the festival (the sixteenth of Nisan), but it may be eaten on the fourteenth and the fifteenth (and the intervening night). So is it set forth in Treatise Pesachim 71b.

Verse 5

Verse 6

בערב כבוא השמש מועד צאתך ממצרים [THERE THOU SHALT SACRIFICE THE PASSOVER] AT EVEN, AT THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN, AT THE APPOINTED TIME THAT THOU

CAME FORTH OUT OF EGYPT — But these are three different points of time! The explanation is: at evening, i.e. from the sixth hour (reckoning from six o'clock in the morning) and onwards you shall slaughter it (תזבח בערב); and when the sun goes down you shall eat it, and at the time when you left Egypt (in the early morning) you shall burn it — that is to say, if in the morning there is any flesh left, it becomes what is technically termed נותר and must be removed to the "place of burning" (not actually burnt, for this is not permissible on a festival) (Sifrei Devarim 133:1; cf. Berakhot 9a).

Verse 7

ובשלת is identical with צלי אש "roast with fire" mentioned in Exodus 12:9, for it (roasting) also comes under the term בשול "cooking" (Mekhilta).
ופנית בבקר AND THOU SHALT TURN IN THE MORNING [AND GO INTO THY TENTS] — i.e. in the morning of the second day of the Passover week. — It teaches us that he (the pilgrim) is required to stay in Jerusalem during the night when the festival terminates (Sifrei Devarim 134:2; Pesachim 95b; Chagigah 17).

Verse 8

ששת ימים תאכל מצות SIX DAYS THOU SHALT EAT UNLEAVENED BREAD — But in another passage it states, (Exodus 12:15): "seven days [ye shall eat unleavened bread]''! But the explanation is: seven days ye may eat Mazzoth prepared from the old produce and six days (out of the seven. i.e. the last six days, after the Omer has been offered and the new crop has become permitted as food) ye may eat Mazzoth prepared from the new crop (Sifrei Devarim 134:5). Another explanation is: It teaches regarding the eating of unleavened bread on the seventh day of Passover that it is not obligatory; and from here (from this law concerning the seventh day) you may derive the law for the other six days. For the seventh day was included in the general statement ("seven days, thou shalt eat unleavened bread''), and in the text: "six days thou shall eat unleavened bread" it has left the general statement, to teach... eating unleavened bread on it is not obligatory but optional. Now, according to the well-known rule, it did not leave the general statement in order to teach this regarding itself alone but regarding everything that is included in the general statement. Now how is it with the seventh day? It is optional as regards the eating of unleavened bread (as explained in the earlier portion of this comment)! This, too, according to the rule, applies also to everything that was included in the general statement, and therefore all the other days are also optional in this respect, with the exception, however, of the first night of Passover, for which Scripture has fixed it (the eating of unleavened bread) as an obligation, as it is said, (Exodus 22:18) "at evening ye shall eat unleavened bread" (Pesachim 120a; cf. also Rashi on Exodus 12:15).
עצרת לה' אלהיך [AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY SHALL BE] A RESTRICTION IN HONOR OF THE LORD — i.e., restrict yourself from work (Chagigh 18a). — Another explanation is that עצרת denotes a gathering for eating and drinking (a banquet), like the expression used (Judges 13:15) "Let us detain (נעצרה) thee [that we may make ready a kid for thee]".

Verse 9

מהחל חרמש בקמה [BEGIN TO NUMBER SEVEN WEEKS] FROM THE TIME THOU BEGINNEST TO PUT THE SICKLE TO THE CORN — i.e. from when the "Omer" has been cut (from the sixteenth of Nisan) which is the first produce to be harvested (Leviticus 23:10) (cf. Sifrei Devarim 136:2-3; Menachot 71a).

Verse 10

מסת נדבת ידך means sufficient (די) free-will offerings of thy hand (i.e. of thy possession) (cf. Targum on Deuteronomy 15:8, which renders די מחסרו by כמסת חסרונה); everything must be in accordance with the blessing which God has bestowed upon you (אשר יברכך): offer peace-offerings of rejoicing and invite guests for the meal.

Verse 11

לוי גר יתום ואלמנה THE LEVITE THE STRANGER, THE FATHERLESS, THE WIDOW — these four are Mine, corresponding to four that are yours, viz., בנך ובתך ועבדך ואמתך THY SON, THY DAUGHTER, THY MAN-SERVANT AND THY MAID-SERVANT; if you gladden Mine, I will gladden yours (Midrash Tanchuma, Re'eh 18).

Verse 12

וזכרת כי עבד היית וגו׳ AND THOU SHALT REMEMBER THAT THOU WAST A SERVANT [IN EGYPT] — Only on this condition did I deliver you from Egypt: that you keep and do these statutes.

Verse 13

באספך [THOU SHALT KEEP THE FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES …] AFTER THAT THOU HAST GATHERED IN THE PRODUCE — i.e. at the usual harvest time, when thou bringest into the house the summer fruits. Another explanation is: באספך מגרנך ומיקבך teaches that one should cover the Succah only with the פסולת (lit., the chips, — that which falls off) of the barn and the wine-press [i.e. with vegetable matter] (Rosh Hashanah 13a; Sukkah 12a).

Verse 14

Verse 15

והיית אך שמח ONLY BE REJOICED — According to its plain sense this is not the expression of a command but expresses an assurance: "thou will be rejoicing". But according to the Halachic interpretation they (the Rabbis) derived from here that the night before the last day of the festival (that preceding the eighth day) is to be included in the obligation of rejoicing (Sukkah 48a; cf. Sifrei Devarim 142:4).

Verse 16

ולא יראה את פני ה׳ ריקם AND THEY SHALL NOT APPEAR BEFORE THE LORD EMPTY, but — bring the burnt offerings that are obligatory when one appears before the Lord, and the peace offerings of the festival.

Verse 17

איש כמתנת ידו EVERY MAN [SHALL BRING] ACCORDING TO THE ABILITY OF HIS HAND TO GIVE — i.e. one who has a large household (lit., many eaters) and great possessions brings many burnt offerings and many peace offerings (Sifrei Devarim 143:10; Chagigah 8b).

Verse 18

שפטים ושטרים JUDGES AND BAILIFFS — שופטים are the judges who pronounce sentence, and שוטרים are those who chastise the people at their (the judges') order [beating and binding the recalcitrant] with a stick and a strap until he accepts the judge's sentence (Sanhedrin 16b and Rashi thereon; cf. Sifrei Devarim 144:6).
בכל שעריך IN ALL THY GATES — i.e. in each town (Sifrei Devarim 144:3).
לשבטיך THROUGHOUT THY TRIBES — This is to be connected with תתן לך, thus: judges and bailiffs shall you make yourself for your tribes in all all your cities that the Lord, your God, gives you.
לשבטיך THROUGHOUT THY TRIBES — This teaches that judges must be appointed for each tribe separately and each city separately (Sifrei Devarim 144:4; Sanhedrin 16b).
ושפטו את העם וגו׳ AND THEY SHALL JUDGE THE PEOPLE [WITH JUST JUDGMENT] — This means, appoint judges who are expert and righteous to give just judgment (cf. Sifrei Devarim 144:7).

Verse 19

לא תטה משפט means what it literally implies: THOU SHALT NOT PERVERT JUDGMENT.
ולא תכיר פנים AND THOU SHALT NOT RESPECT PERSONS — not even if it be only during the pleadings of the parties. This is an admonition addressed to the judge that he should not be lenient to one and harsh to the other, e.g. letting one stand and the other sit; because as soon as he (the party treated harshly) observes that the judge shows more respect to his fellow his ability to plead is hampered (i.e. he loses self-confidence and cannot present his case with assurance) (cf. Shevuot 30a).
ולא תקח שחד NEITHER TAKE BRIBERY — even if you mean to give a just judgment in favor of the giver (Sifrei Devarim 144:10; cf. Rashi on Exodus 23:8).
כי השחד יעור FOR BRIBERY DOES BLIND — As soon as he (the judge) has accepted a bribe from him (from one of the parties) it is impossible for him not to incline his heart to him trying to find something in his favor (Ketuvot 105b).
דברי צדיקם means, the words which have been described by the term "righteous" viz., the judgments of truth uttered on Sinai (cf. Rashi on Exodus 22:8 and Note thereon).

Verse 20

צדק צדק תרדף JUSTICE, JUSTICE SHALT THOU PURSUE — go to (search after) a reliable court (Sifrei Devarim 144:14; Sanhedrin 32b).
למען תחיה וירשת [JUSTICE, JUSTICE SHALT THOU PURSUE] THAT THOU MAYEST LIVE, AND INHERIT [THE LAND WHICH THE LORD THY GOD GIVETH THEE] — The appointment of honest judges is sufficient merit to keep Israel in life and to settle them in security in their land (Sifrei Devarim 144:15).

Verse 21

לא תטע לך אשרה THOU SHALT NOT PLANT THEE AN ASHERA — This is intended to make one liable to punishment regarding it from the very moment that he plants it (the Ashera); even though he does not worship it he transgresses a negative command by the mere planting of it (Sifrei Devarim 145:1).
לא תטע לך אשרה כל עץ אצל מזבח ה' אלהיך THOU SHALT NOT PLANT THEE AN ASHERA, ANY TREE NEAR UNTO THE ALTAR OF THE LORD THY GOD — This is a prohibition addressed to one who would plant a tree or build a house on the Temple mount (הר הבית) (Sifrei Devarim 145:1).

Verse 22

ולא תקים לך מצבה NEITHER SHALT THOU RAISE ANY MONUMENT — i.e. a monument of one stone (cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 12:3), not even in order to sacrifice on it to Heaven (to God).
אשר שנא WHICH [THE LORD THY GOD] HATETH — An altar of stones and an altar of earth He has commanded you to make; this, however, He hates, because it was a religious ordinance amongst the Canaanites. And although it was pleasing to Him in the days of our Patriarchs (cf. Genesis 28:18), now He hates it because these (Canaanites) made it an ordinance of an idolatrous character (cf. Sifrei Devarim 146).

Chapter 17

Verse 1

לא תזבח... כל דבר רע THOU SHALT NOT SACRIFICE [UNTO THE LORD THY GOD ANY OF THE HERD OR FLOCK WHEREIN IS BLEMISH OR] ANY EVIL THING — This is an admonition to one who would make sacrifices abominable through an evil utterance (דבר רע). (See Rashi on Leviticus 7:18; cf. Sifrei Devarim 147:5). Besides this, other Halachas have been derived from it in the Treatise on "The slaughtering of Sacrifices" (Zevachim 36).

Verse 2

לעבר בריתו TRANSGRESSING HIS COVENANT — i.e. the covenant which He made with you not to practise idolatry.

Verse 3

אשר לא צויתי [AND HATH GONE AND SERVED OTHER GODS … EITHER THE SUN, OR MOON, OR ANY OF THE HOST OF HEAVEN] WHICH I HAVE NOT COMMANDED to worship them (Megillah 9b).

Verse 4

נכון [AND, BEHOLD, IT BE TRUE, AND THE THING BE] CERTAIN — i.e. the evidence of the witnesses is in agreement (מְכֻוָּן)

Verse 5

והוצאת את האיש ההוא אל שעריך וגו׳ THEN THOU SHALT BRING FORTH THAT MAN [OR THAT WOMAN WHO HAVE DONE THAT EVIL THING] UNTO THY GATES — He who renders אל שעריך in the Targum by לתרע בית דינך, unto the gate of thy court, is in error, for thus we have learned (Sifrei Devarim 148:2; Ketubot 45b): אל שעריך — this means the gate (the city) in which he has worshipped the idol. Or, perhaps this is not so, but it means the gate where he is being judged (the judges sat "at the gate of the city"; cf., e.g., Ruth 4:1 ff.)?! The term שעריך, however, is used below (i.e. here, which is the latter part of this section) and is used above (v. 2), and this suggests an analogy. What is the meaning of שעריך that is mentioned above? Evidently the gate (the city) wherein he served the idol! So, too, does שעריך mentioned below (in our verse) denote the gate in which he served the idol. The correct rendering in the Targum is therefore לקרויך "thou shalt bring him forth unto thy cities" (cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 16:18).

Verse 6

שנים עדים או שלשה [BY THE MOUTH OF] TWO WITNESSES OR THREE [WITNESSES, SHALL HE THAT IS WORTHY OF DEATH BE PUT TO DEATH] — But if evidence can be established by two witnesses to what end does it (Scripture) mention to you explicitly that it may be established by three? Scripture does so in order to compare the evidence of three witnesses to that of two (to make the same law apply to both cases). How is it in the case of two? Their evidence forms one testimony; so, too, does the evidence of three (or many) witnesses form one testimony and they cannot be declared "plotting witnesses" unless all of them are proved to be "plotting witnesses" (Makkot 5b).

Verse 7

Verse 8

כי יפלא IF THERE BE [A THING] TOO HARD [FOR THEE IN JUDGMENT] — The term פלא always denotes separation and being at a distance; it means here that the matter is apart and is hidden from thee.
בין דם לדם [IF THERE IS ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR THEE IN JUDGMENT] BETWEEN BLOOD AND BLOOD — i.e. between the blood of the menstruous woman that may be unclean blood, and blood that may be clean (Niddah 19a; cf. Sifrei Devarim 152:5),
בין דין לדין BETWEEN PLEA AND PLEA — i.e. between a verdict of acquittal and a verdict of "guilty".
בין נגע לנגע BETWEEN PLAGUE AND PLAGUE — i.e. between a plague that may be unclean and a plague that may be clean.
דברי ריבה BEING THINGS OF STRIFE [WITHIN THY GATES] — i.e. that the scholars of the city (the judges) be of different opinions in that particular matter (cf. Onkelos), the one declaring it unclean, the other clean, the one sentencing, the other acquitting,
וקמת ועלית THEN SHALT THOU RISE AND GO UP [UNTO THE PLACE WHICH THE LORD THY GOD SHALL CHOOSE] — This (the phrase "go up") teaches that the Temple (in the vicinity of which the Sanhedrin sat) was situated higher than all other places in Palestine (Sifrei Devarim 152:15; Sanhedrin 87a). (cf. however, Ibn Ezra on Numbers 16:12.)

Verse 9

הכהנים הלוים [AND THOU SHALT COME UNTO] THE PRIESTS THE LEVITES — i.e. unto the priests, who descend from of the tribe of Levi.
ואל השפט אשר יהיה בימים ההם [AND THOU SHALT COME UNTO THE PRIESTS …] AND UNTO THE JUDGE THAT SHALL BE IN THOSE DAYS — The last apparently redundant words suggest: and even though he is not as eminent as other judges that have been before him, you must obey him — you have none else but the judge that lives in your days (i.e. you are only concerned with him) (Rosh Hashanah 25b).

Verse 10

Verse 11

ימין ושמאל [THOU SHALT NOT DEPART FROM THE WORD WHICH THEY SHALL TELL THEE] TO THE RIGHT NOR TO THE LEFT, even if he (the judge) tells you about what appears to you to be right that it is left, or about what appears to you to be left that it is right, you have to obey him; how much the more is this so if actually he tells you about what is evidently

right that it is right and about what is left that it is left (cf. Sifrei Devarim 154:5).

Verse 12

Verse 13

וכל העם ישמעו AND ALL THE PEOPLE SHALL HEAR [AND FEAR] — From here we derive the law that they wait for him (i.e. defer the execution of a זקן ממרא, an elder who disregards the decision of the Supreme Court, to whom Scripture refers in v. 12 by the words והאיש אשר יעשה בזדון) until the next festival (when all Israel is assembled in Jerusalem) and they put him to death at the season of the festival (Sanhedrin 89a).

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

לא ירבה לו סוסים HE SHALL NOT MULTIPLY HORSES TO HIMSELF — but he shall have only what is sufficient for his carriages, in order that he shall not cause the people to return to Egypt, because horses come from there, as it is said in the history of Solomon (1 Kings 10:29) "And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver and a horse for a hundred and fifty" (Sanhedrin 21b).

Verse 17

ולא ירבה לו נשים NEITHER SHALL HE MULTIPLY WIVES TO HIMSELF only eighteen, for we find that David had six wives, and it was announced to him (by Nathan the prophet): "[Thus saith the Lord … I gave thy master's wives into thy bosom] … and if that had been too little, I would add unto thee such and such as these (i.e. twice as many)" (Sanhedrin 21a).
וכסף וזהב לא ירבה לו מאד NEITHER SHALL HE GREATLY MULTIPLY TO HIMSELF SILVER AND GOLD — but only as much as he needs for his soldiers' pay (Sanhedrin 21a).

Verse 18

והיה כשבתו AND IT SHALL BE WHEN HE SITTETH [UPON THE THRONE OF HIS KINGDOM] — if he acts thus (as prescribed in the previous verses) he is worthy that his kingdom should endure (Sifrei Devarim 160:1).
את משנה התורה [HE SHALL WRITE HIM] A משנה תורה — i.e. two scrolls of the Law, one that is placed in his treasury and the other that goes out and comes in with him (i.e. a small scroll which he carries everywhere with him) (Sanhedrin 21b). Onkelos, however, renders משנה by פתשגן, a copy; he thus interpreted the word משנה in the sense of שנן, repeating and uttering.

Verse 19

דברי התורה [ALL] THE WORDS OF [THIS] LAW — Take it as what it literally implies.

Verse 20

ולבלתי סור מן המצוה AND THAT HE DEPART NOT FROM THE COMMANDMENT — not even from a less important command given to him by means of a prophet. למען יאריך ימים TO THE END THAT HE MAY PROLONG HIS DAYS [IN HIS KINGDOM] — From the positive statement you may derive the negative (that if he does not fulfil the commandments his kingdom will not endure). And so, indeed, do we find in the case of Saul that Samuel said to him, (I Samuel 10:8) "Seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come unto thee" to offer burnt sacrifices, and it is written, (I Samuel 13:8) "and he tarried seven days", but he did not keep his promise to wait the whole of the seventh day and had scarcely finished offering the burnt offering when Samuel came (I Samuel 10:10) and said to him (I Samuel 10:13-14) "Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept [the commandment of the Lord thy God, which He commanded thee; for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever;] but now thy kingdom shall not continue". Thus you learn that for the neglect of an unimportant command given by means of a prophet he was severely punished.
הוא ובניו [THAT HE MAY PROLONG HIS DAYS IN HIS KINGDOM] HE, AND HIS CHILDREN — This tells you that if his son is worthy of becoming king he has to be given preference to any other person (Horayot 11b).

Chapter 18

Verse 1

כל שבט לוי [THE PRIESTS THE LEVITES] NAMELY ALL THE TRIBE OF LEVI [SHALL HAVE NO PORTION … WITH ISRAEL] — all the tribe, whether they be able-bodied or whether they be blemished (Sifrei Devarim 163:1).
חלק A PORTION — i.e. in the spoil that is taken in battle (Sifrei Devarim 163:2),
ונחלה AND INHERITANCE — in the land (Sifrei Devarim 163:3).
אשי ה' THE FIRE OFFERINGS OF THE LORD — the holy things brought into the Temple (Sifrei Devarim 163:4),
ונחלתו AND HIS INHERITANCE — this refers to the holy things that might be consumed outside Jerusalem (גבולין) — the heave-offerings and the tithes (Sifrei Devarim 163:4) these they shall eat, BUT נחלה AN INHERITANCE, a real inheritance, לא יהיה לו בקרב אחיו SHALL HE NOT HAVE AMONG HIS BRETHREN. In Sifrei Devarim 164, they (the Rabbis) gave the following interpretation: ונחלה לא יהיה לו — this refers to the נחלת שאר the inheritance of the בקרב אחיו. שאר — AMONG HIS BRETHREN — this refers to the inheritance of the five. I do not, however, know for certain what this means (what Sifrei means by שאר and חמשה). But it seems to me that the part of the land of Canaan which is on the other (the western) side of the Jordan and onwards is called the land of the five nations (and these are therefore the five referred to by Sifrei), whilst the territory of Sihon and Og on the eastern side might be called the land of the two nations, viz., the Amorites and the Canaanites, — and נחלת שאר mentioned in Sifrei is intended to include the land of the remaining clans (שאר), the Kenite, the Kenizzite, and the Kadmonite, which will become Israel's inheritance in some future time. (But the land of Sihon and Og need not be mentioned since this was already divided among the two and a half tribes, and it was known that the tribe of Levi had no share in it.) Similarly it (Sifrei) makes a comment in "the section dealing with the gifts that were promised to Aaron" on the verse (Numbers 18:24) "wherefore [I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance]" that it is intended to express a warning

regarding the land of the Kenite, the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite (i.e. that not even in later times when Israel will inherit the land of these nations shall the Levite have a portion in it). — It has since been found in the words of Rabbi Kalonymus that the proper version of this passage in Sifrei reads as follows: ונחלה לא יהיה לו BUT THEY SHALL HAVE NO INHERITANCE — this refers to the territory of the five, בקרב אחיו AMONGST THEIR BRETHREN — this refers to the territory of the seven, and he explains that this means the five tribes and the seven tribes. And because Moses and Joshua assigned an inheritance in the land only to five tribes — for Moses assigned their inheritance to Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, and Joshua assigned their inheritance to Judah, Ephraim and the other half tribe of Manasseh, whilst the remaining seven tribes took their portions themselves in the land (conquered it) after the death of Joshua — for this reason it (Scripture) mentions (alludes to) the five tribes separately and to the seven separately.

Verse 2

כאשר דבר לו AS HE SPOKE TO HIM i.e., to Aaron [saying],"You shall not inherit in their land… I am your portion [and your inheritance, among the children of Israel]."- (Numbers 18:20)

Verse 3

מאת העם [AND THIS SHALL BE THE PRIESTS' DUE] FROM THE PEOPLE — but not from the priest (i.e. if a priest slaughters animals for his own use he is exempt from giving these dues to another priest) (Sifrei Devarim 165:3; cf. Chullin 132b).
אם שור אם שה WHETHER IT BE ONE OF THE HERD OR ONE OF THE FLOCK — this excludes an undomesticated beast (חיה).
הזרע THE SHOULDER is the portion from the knee-joint to the shoulder-blade that is called espalte in old French (cf. Rashi on Chullin 134b).
והלחיים THE TWO CHEEKS — together with the tongue. — Those who interpret the Bible text symbolically (cf. Chullin 134b) said: The זרוע of the animals, (termed יד in later Hebrew), became the due of the priests as a reward for the "hand'' (יד) which Phineas, the priest, raised against the wrong-doers, as it is said. (Numbers 25:7) "and he took a javelin in his hand"; the "cheek-bones" together with the tongue are a reward for the prayer he offered, as it is said, (Psalms 106:30) "Then stood up Phineas and prayed"; והקבה AND THE MAW — as a reward for his act described thus (Numbers 25:8): "[And he thrust both of them through, the man of Israel] and the woman in her stomach (קבתה) (Chullin 134b).

Verse 4

ראשית דגנך THE FIRST-FRUIT [ALSO] OF THY CORN … [THOU SHALT GIVE HIM] — This refers to the heave-offering. Scripture, however, does not state any minimum quantity, but our Rabbis fixed a quantity for it from a sixtieth to a fortieth: a benevolent eye (a generous person) gives one fortieth of the crop, a niggard at least one sixtieth, a person of average generosity one fiftieth. They found a support in Scripture that one should not give less than one sixtieth, because it is said, (Ezekiel 45:13) "[This is the heave-offering which ye shall offer:] the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of wheat". Now the sixth part of an ephah is a half Seah; if therefore you give half a Seah as Terumah from a Kor (which is another term for a Homer), that is a sixtieth part, for a Kor is thirty Seahs (Talmud Yerushalmi Terumot 4:3).
וראשית גז צאנך AND THE FIRST OF THE FLEECE OF THY FLOCK [SHALT THOU GIVE HIM] — i.e. each year when you sheer your sheep (not when you shear a particular animal for the first time) give the first of it (the wool) to

the priest. Scripture mentions no minimum quantity for it, but our Rabbis assigned a quantity for it, viz., one sixtieth part. And how many sheep must there be in the flock that they should come under the law of ראשית הגז (of "giving the first shearing as a gift to the priest")? At least five sheep, as it is said, (I Samuel 25:18) "[Then Abigail made haste and … took] five sheep ready dressed (עשויות). Rabbi Akiba says: we may derive it from our text itself, as follows: ראשית גז suggests two, צאנך also two, together four, תתן לו one, — altogether five (Chullin 137a; Sifrei Devarim 166:9).

Verse 5

לעמד לשרת TO STAND TO MINISTER — From here we may derive the law that the sacrificial service must be performed standing (Sifrei Devarim 167:1; Sota 38a).

Verse 6

וכי יבא הלוי AND IF A LEVITE COME […AND MINISTER] — One might think that Scripture speaks of a "Levite" in the usual sense of the word (i.e. of a לוי and not of a כהן)! Scripture, however, goes on to state, (v. 7) "And he shall minister [in the name of the Lord]"; thus the Levites must be excluded for they are not fit for (not entitled to) service in the Temple (Sifrei Devarim 168:1).
ובא בכל אות נפשו ושרת AND COME WITH ALL THE LONGING OF HIS SOUL …AND MINISTER — This teaches that a priest may come and offer his free-will and obligatory sacrifices even at a time when a priestly shift is in charge to which he does not belong (Bava Kamma 109b). Another explanation: It further teaches regarding priests who appear in the Temple as pilgrims on the festivals that they may offer [with the rota], and do the services connected with the sacrifices that are offered on account of the festival, as for instance, the additional offerings due on festivals — although the shift is not theirs (Sifrei Devarim 168:3; Sukkah 55b).

Verse 7

Verse 8

חלק כחלק יאכלו THEY SHALL ENJOY LIKE PORTIONS — This teaches that they (the priests who come to Jerusalem on the festivals as pilgrims but are not in charge) participate in the hides (of the burnt offerings due on the festivals) and the flesh of the he goats brought as sin-offerings on account of the festivals. One might think that they participate also in sacrifices which are offered not on account of the festivals, as, for instance, the continual burnt offerings, the additional offerings due on account of Sabbath (on which a festival happens to fall) and vow- and free-will offerings! Scripture, however, states: לבד ממכריו על האבות [THEY SHALL ENJOY LIKE PORTIONS] EXCEPT THE SALE OF THE FATHERS — i.e. except those things which their ancestors sold to each other in the days of David and Samuel when the system of shifts was established and they made, as it were, an agreement of sale, saying, "Take thou the ordinary priestly perquisites during thy week and I shall take them during my week (Sifrei Devarim 169:3; Sukkah 56a).

Verse 9

לא תלמד לעשות THOU SHALT NOT LEARN TO DO [AFTER THE ABOMINATIONS OF THOSE NATIONS] — thou shalt not learn to do, but you may learn their practices in order to understand them and to teach others, that is to say, to understand their doings, how depraved they are, and thus to be able to teach thy children, "Do not so and so because these are the religious observances of the heathens!" (Sifrei Devarim 170:3; Sanhedrin 68a.)

Verse 10

מעביר בנו ובתו באש [THERE SHALL NOT BE FOUND AMONG YOU ANYONE] THAT MAKETH HIS SON OR HIS DAUGHTER TO PASS THROUGH THE FIRE — This was the way of worshipping Molech. They made two pyres, one on this side and one on the other (one opposite the other) and passed it (the child) between them (cf. Sanhedrin 64b).
קסם קסמים ONE THAT USETH DIVINATION — What is a diviner? One who takes his stick in hand and says, (as though he were consulting it), "Shall I go, or shall I not go?" So does it state, (Hoshea 4:12) "My people ask counsel of their stick, and their staff declareth unto them" (Sifrei Devarim 171:6).
מעונן — Rabbi Akiba said, Such are people who assign times (עונות plural of עונה "period", "time") — who say, "This time is auspicious to begin some work"; the Sages, however, say, It refers to those "who hold your eyes under control" (who delude by optical deception; they connect מעונן with עין "eye") (Sifrei Devarim 171:9).
מנחש A SORCERER — [one who draws prognostications from the fact that] the bread fell from his mouth, or that a stag crossed his path, or that his stick fell from his hand (Sifrei Devarim 171:10; Sanhedrin 65b; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 19:26).

Verse 11

וחבר חבר OR A CHARMER — One who charms snakes or scorpions or other creatures into one spot (חבר = "an assembly") (Sifrei Devarim 172:1).
ושאל אוב OR A CONSULTER OF THE SPIRIT אוב — This is a kind of sorcery brought about by a spirit whose name is פיתום (in Greek: πύξον) who speaks out of his (the charmer's) arm-pit, having raised a corpse beneath his arm-pit (Sifrei Devarim 172:2).
וידעני is one who puts a bone of an animal, the name of which is יִדּוּעַ, into his mouth and the bone speaks by way of sorcery (Sanhedrin 65a; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 19:31 and Note thereon).
ודרש אל המתים OR A NECROMANCER — as, for instance, one who raises a corpse, placing it on his genitals, or who consults a skull (Sifrei Devarim 172:4; cf. Sanhedrin 65b).

Verse 12

כל אלה עשה [FOR] ALL THAT DO THESE THINGS [ARE AN ABOMINATION UNTO THE LORD] — it does not say, "he who does all these things", but "all who do these things" — who do even only one of them (Sifrei Devarim 173:1; cf. Makkot 24a).

Verse 13

תמים תהיה עם ה' אלהיך THOU SHALT BE PERFECT WITH THE LORD THY GOD — walk before him whole-heartedly, put thy hope in Him and do not attempt to investigate the future, but whatever it may be that comes upon thee accept it whole-heartedly, and then thou shalt be with Him and become His portion (Sifrei Devarim 173:3).

Verse 14

לא כן נתן לך ה' אלהיך BUT NOT SO HATH THE LORD THY GOD SUFFERED THEE [TO DO] — i.e. to hearken unto מעוננים and קוסמים, for you see, He has made His Divine Presence dwell upon the prophets and upon the "Urim and Thummim" (and these will, if necessary, inform thee of what God has in store for thee).

Verse 15

מקרבך מאחיך כמני [THE LORD THY GOD WILL RAISE UP UNTO THEE A PROPHET] FROM THE MIDST OF THEE, OF THY BRETHREN, LIKE UNTO ME — This means: One who is as I am, from your midst, of your brethren, יקים לך WILL HE RAISE UP UNTO THEE in my stead, and so likewise from prophet to prophet throughout all ages.

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

אשר לא צויתיו לדבר [BUT THE PROPHET WHO SHALL PRESUME TO SPEAK A WORD …] WHICH I HAVE NOT COMMANDED HIM TO SPEAK — but which I may have commanded his fellow-prophet to speak (Sanhedrin 89a),
ואשר ידבר בשם אלהים אחרים OR THAT SHALL SPEAK IN THE NAME OF OTHER GODS — even though he be in exact agreement with the Halacha, — that he forbids what is forbidden, or permits what is permitted, [but does so in the name of other gods] (Sanhedrin 89a),
ומת HE SHALL DIE — by strangulation. — There are three false prophets who must be put to death by man (by the court): one who prophesies something which he has not heard (was not commanded to prophesy); one who prophesies something that was not spoken unto him but was spoken unto his fellow-prophet, and finally one who prophesies in the name of an idol. But he who suppresses his prophecy (does not utter it as commanded to do), and he who transgresses the words of a prophet, or, being himself a prophet, transgresses his own words — their death is by the Heavenly Judge, for it is said, (v. 19) "I" will require it from him" (Sanhedrin 89a).

Verse 21

וכי תאמר בלבבך AND IF THOU SAY IN THINE HEART [HOW SHALL WE KNOW THE WORD WHICH THE LORD HATH NOT SPOKEN]? — you will once ask this — when Hananiah the son of Azur (the false prophet) comes and prophesies (Jeremiah 27:16) "Behold, the vessels of the Lord's house will now shortly be brought again from Babylon", whilst Jeremiah (the true prophet) stands and proclaims (Jeremiah 27:19—22) "concerning the pillars, and concerning the laver, and concerning the bases, and concerning the residue of the

vessels [which remain in this city which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took not,…]" which did not go into exile to Babylon with Jeconiah, king of Judah, "they shall be carried to Babylon [and there they shall remain]" together with Zedekiah when he will go into exile (Sifrei Devarim 178:2).

Verse 22

אשר ידבר הנביא WHEN THE PROPHET SPEAKETH [IN THE NAME OF THE LORD] and says, "This thing will once happen to you", and you will see that it did not happen, הוא הדבר אשר לא דברו ה׳ THAT IS THE THING WHICH THE LORD HATH NOT SPOKEN — and, therefore, slay him. If, however, you say, "But this refers to one who will prophesy about the future. But suppose one comes and says, 'Do so and so, and I say this by the command of the Holy One blessed be He'? How, then, can we know whether God has spoken this or not?" The reply is: As regards such a case they have already been commanded that if one comes to thrust thee away from one of the divine commandments, לא תשמע לו "then thou shalt not hearken unto him" (Deuteronomy 13:12), unless you are certain that he is a perfectly righteous man, as, for instance. Elijah at the incident on Mount Carmel, who offered sacrifices on a Bamah (an improvised altar) at a time when offering on Bamoth was forbidden, but who did so in order to fence Israel in against idolatry. Thus all depends on the needs of the time and the necessity of taking preventive measures (סיג) against a breach. With reference to such a case it states, (v. 15) "unto him ye shall hearken" (Sanhedrin 89b; Yevamot 90b).
לא תגור ממנו THOU SHALT NOT BE AFRAID OF HIM — i.e. do not refrain from advocating his guilt (Sifrei Devarim 178:3) and do not fear that you may incur punishment on his account (because you have contributed to his death).

Chapter 19

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

תכין לך הדרך THOU SHALT PREPARE THEE A WAY — "Refuge!" "Refuge!" was inscribed at each crossroad (to point the way to the nearest city of refuge) (Makkot 10b).
ושלשת את גבול ארצך AND THOU SHALT DIVIDE THE TERRITORY OF THY LAND … INTO THREE PARTS — so that from the point where the boundary begins unto the first city of refuge there should be the same length of journey as there is from it to the second city; and that there should be the same distance from the second to the third and from the third to the other (opposite) boundary of the Land of Israel (Makkot 9b).

Verse 4

Verse 5

ונדחה ידו AND HIS HAND MOVED (SLIPPED) when he was about to let the axe fall upon the tree. The Targum rendering is ותתמריג ידה, the meaning being, "his hand moved itself to let the stroke of the axe fall upon the tree". The words (II Samuel 6:6) כי שמטו הבקר are rendered in Targum Jonathan on by: ארי מרגוהי תוריא "for the oxen moved it (the Ark)" ונשל הברזל מן העץ — Some of our Rabbis say that this means that the iron (axe) flew off from its handle (העץ); but some of them say that it means that the iron made a splinter of wood fall off from the tree which was being chopped, and it sprang off and killed him (according to this explanation the word העץ in both cases refers to the tree) (Makkot 7b).

Verse 6

פן ירדף גאל הדם LEST THE AVENGER OF THE BLOOD PURSUE [THE SLAYER] — therefore I tell you to prepare the way for you and [to prepare] many cities of refuge.

Verse 7

Verse 8

ואם ירחיב … כאשר נשבע AND IF [THE LORD THY GOD] ENLARGE [THY TERRITORY], AS HE HATH SWORN [UNTO THY FATHERS] to give thee the land of the Kenite, the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite (Sifrei Devarim 184:3).

Verse 9

ויספת לך עוד שלש THEN THOU SHALT ADD THREE [CITIES] MORE FOR THEE — Thus you have nine altogether: the three on the east side of the Jordan, the three in the land of Canaan and three more in the future to come when God will enlarge thy territory (Sifrei Devarim 185:1).

Verse 10

Verse 11

וכי יהיה איש שנא לרעהו BUT IF A MAN HATE HIS FELLOW [AND LIE IN WAIT FOR HIM] — It is through his hatred that he comes to such a point as to "lie in wait for him". From here they (the Rabbis) derived their statement: If a man transgresses a light command he will in the end transgress a weighty command; — because he transgressed the command (Leviticus 19:17) "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart", he will in the end come to such a point as to shed blood. It is for this reason that it is stated here, apparently redundantly, "but if a man hate his fellow [and lie in wait for him]", for it ought to have written only: "But if a man rise up and lie in wait for his fellow and smite him mortally" (Sifrei Devarim 186:2).

Verse 12

Verse 13

לא תחוס עינך THINE EYE SHALL NOT PITY [HIM] — i.e. that thou shall not say, The first (the one) person has already been killed, why should we kill this also, so that two Israelites will be killed? (Sifrei Devarim 187:7).

Verse 14

לא תסיג גבול THOU SHALT NOT REMOVE [THY FELLOW-MAN'S] LANDMARK — תסיג is of the same meaning as (Isaiah 42:17) "they are turned back (נסגו אחור)". The meaning is, that one moves the mark that shows the division of the land (i.e. the division between two adjoining fields) backwards into the field of his neighbour in order thereby to enlarge his own. — But does it not already state. (Leviticus 19:13) "Thou shalt not rob", why, then, is it also commanded "Thou shalt not remove the landmark"? It teaches that one who obliterates his neighbour's border line transgresses two negative commands (לא תגזול and לא תסיג). One might think that this is the case also if one does so outside the Land of Israel! Scripture, however, states, "in thine inheritance which thou shalt inherit [in the land]";— thus in the Land of Israel one who does this transgresses two negative commands, whilst outside the Land he transgresses only the command of לא תגזול (Sifrei Devarim 188:1-2).

Verse 15

עד אחד ONE WITNESS [SHALL NOT RISE UP AGAINST A MAN FOR ANY INIQUITY] — This is the classic passage from which the general principle is derived that wherever the term "witness" (עד) occurs in the Torah, it means two witnesses, unless it specifically mentions in connection with it the word אחד (Sanhedrin 30a).
לכל עון ולכל חטאת [ONE WITNESS SHALL NOT RISE UP AGAINST A PERSON] FOR ANY INIQUITY OR ANY SIN — i.e. that his fellow man should be punished on account of his evidence either by bodily punishment or by a monetary punishment; but he may rise up against his fellow men to compel him to take an oath. If, for instance, one says to his fellow, "Return me the maneh which I lent you", and he replies "I have nothing of yours in my possession", and one witness testifies that he has, he (the defendant) must take an oath to satisfy him (Shevuot 40a; cf. Sifrei Devarim 188:9).
על פי שני עדים [AT THE MOUTH OF TWO WITNESSES... SHALL THE MATTER BE ESTABLISHED] — at their mouth, but not that they may write their evidence down in a letter and send it to the court, nor that an interpreter stand between the witnesses and the judges (Sifrei Devarim 188:10).

Verse 16

לענות בו סרה [IF A WITNESS FOR VIOLENCE RISE UP AGAINST A MAN] TO TESTIFY AGAINST HIM סרה — i.e. a thing which does not exist at all; this term is used because this witness is far removed (הוסר) from having anything to do with this testimony. How is this? (Give an example of such a case)?! That two other witnesses say, "But were you not with us on that day (when you say you saw the defendant committing this crime) in such and such a place (different from that where the alleged crime, according to you, has taken place)?!" (Makkot 5a).

Verse 17

ועמדו שני האנשים THEN BOTH THE MEN... SHALL STAND [BEFORE THE LORD] — Scripture here is referring to the witnesses, and teaches firstly that no evidence is valid when given by women, and teaches secondly that they (the witnesses) must submit their testimony while standing (Shevuot 30a; cf. Sifrei Devarim 190:1-3).

אשר להם הריב BETWEEN WHOM THE STRIFE IS — this refers to the contestants (Sanhedrin 19a).
לפני ה' BEFORE THE LORD — It should seem to them as though they are standing before the Omnipresent God, for it is said, (Psalms 82:1) "He (God) judges amongst the judges" (cf. Sifrei Devarim 190:5; Sanhedrin 6b).
אשר יהיו בימים ההם [AND THEY... SHALL STAND BEFORE... THE JUDGES] WHO SHALL BE IN THOSE DAYS — The apparently redundant words "who shall be in those days" suggest: Jephthah in his generation must be regarded as was Samuel in his generation: you must treat him with respect (Rosh Hashanah 25b; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 17:9 and Deuteronomy 26:3).

Verse 18

ודרשו השפטים היטב AND THE JUDGES SHALL DILIGENTLY ENQUIRE concerning the statement of those who assert them (the first witnesses) to be "plotting witnesses", in that they investigate and crossexamine those who assert them to be "plotting witnesses" by diligent enquiry and scrutiny.
והנה עד שקר העד AND, BEHOLD, IF THE WITNESS BE A FALSE WITNESS — Wherever עד is written, [except if the numeral אחד, "one" is added (cf. Rashi on v. 15)], Scripture is speaking of two witnesses (Sanhedrin 30a).

Verse 19

כאשר זמם [THEN SHALL YE DO UNTO HIM] AS HE HAD INTENDED TO HAVE DONE [UNTO HIS BROTHER] — as he had intended to do, but not as he has done! Hence they (the Rabbis) stated that if they (the false witnesses) have already killed (i.e. if by their evidence the defendant has already been executed) they are not put to death (Makkot 5b).
לעשות לאחיו [THEN SHALL YE DO UNTO HIM AS HE HAD INTENDED] TO HAVE DONE TO HIS BROTHER — What is the force of לאחיו? Would it not have sufficed to state כאשר זמם לעשות? But it teaches in regard to witnesses who have been proved to have "plotted" against a married daughter of a priest by an accusation of adultery, that they are not to be punished with burning (as would have been the punishment of the accused woman, if she had been found guilty), but with the death penalty to which the alleged adulterer would have been subject, which is strangulation. For it is said of such a woman, (Leviticus 21:9) "she shall be burnt to death" — ''she", but not her paramour (he is not burnt but strangled) — therefore it states here לאחיו, "unto his brother" — ''[ye shall do unto him] as he had intended to have done to his brother" but not as he had intended to have done to his sister. This case, however, is an exception, but with regard to any other death penalties Scripture puts women on the same level with men, and consequently those who are proved to have "plotted" against a woman are made to suffer the same death penalty as those who are proved to have "plotted" against a man. For instance, they have testified against her that she killed a person, or that she desecrated the Sabbath, then they are made to suffer the death she would have suffered, for Scripture excludes here by the word אחיו the "plotting" witnesses from the death penalty of the sister (i.e. which the woman would have suffered) only because it is a case where the law regarding plotting witnesses can be applied to them by letting them suffer the death-penalty of the paramour (Sifrei Devarim 190:14; Sanhedrin 90a).

Verse 20

ישמעו ויראו [AND THOSE WHO REMAIN] SHALL HEAR AND FEAR — From here we derive the law that a public announcement is required: "The men named so-and-so are to be executed because they have been convicted by the court as "plotting witnesses" (Sanhedrin 89a).

Verse 21

עין בעין EYE FOR EYE — i.e. monetary compensation; similarly also "tooth for tooth" etc. (Sifrei Devarim 190:16; Bava Kamma 84a; cf. also Rashi on Exodus 21:24).

Chapter 20

Verse 1

כי תצא למלחמה WHEN THOU GOEST OUT TO WAR — Scripture places the going out to war in juxtaposition to this section here (to עין בעין וכו׳) in order to tell you that no person lacking a limb goes out to war (cf. Sifrei Devarim 190:17). Another explanation of why these two sections are put in juxtaposition to each other: it is to tell you that if you execute just judgment you may be confident that if you go to war you will be victorious. Similarly does David say, (Psalms 119:121) "I have done judgement and justice; Thou wilt not leave me to my oppressors" (Midrash Tanchuma, Shoftim 15).
על איבך AGAINST THINE ENEMIES — Let them be in thine eyes as enemies: have no pity upon them, for they will have no pity upon thee (Midrash Tanchuma, Shoftim 15).
סוס ורכב [WHEN THOU GOEST TO WAR... AND SEEST] HORSES AND CHARIOTS (lit., horse and chariot) — in Mine eyes they are all as only one horse (i.e. they do not count). Similarly it states, (Judges 6:16) "[Surely "I" will be with thee,] and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man". And similarly it states, (Exodus 15:19) "For the horse (not the horses) of Pharaoh came [into the sea]" (Midrash Tanchuma, Shoftim 16; cf. Sifrei Devarim 190:21).
עם רב ממך [WHEN THOU GOEST OUT TO WAR … AND SEEST] PEOPLE MORE THAN THOU (or, as it may be translated: PEOPLE, NUMEROUS FROM THY POINT OF VIEW) — in thine eyes they may appear to be numerous but in Mine eyes they are not numerous (Midrash Tanchuma, Shoftim 16).

Verse 2

כקרבכם אל המלחמה [IT SHALL BE] WHEN YE COME NIGH UNTO THE BATTLE, [THAT THE PRIEST … SHALL SPEAK] — i.e. when ye are on the point of leaving the ספר — the boundary of your land (Sifrei Devarim 191).
ונגש הכהן AND "THE" PRIEST SHALL STEP NIGH [AND SPEAK] "the" priest means, he who has been anointed for that purpose; it is the one who is termed in the Talmud משוח מלחמה, "the priest anointed for war" (Sotah 42a).
ודבר אל העם AND HE SHALL SPEAK UNTO THE PEOPLE — in the Holy Language (Sotah 42a).

Verse 3

שמע ישראל [AND HE SHALL SAY UNTO THEM] HEAR O ISRAEL — Even though you have no other merit than the fulfilment of the command of "Reading the Shema" you would deserve that He should help you (Sotah 42a).
על איבכם [YE APPROACH THIS DAY UNTO WAR] AGAINST YOUR ENEMIES — By these apparently redundant words the priest says, as it were: Remember that these are not your brethren, and if you will fall into their hands they will have no pity on you; — it is not like the war of Judah against Israel of which it states, (II Chronicles 28:15) "And the men which were expressed by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil

clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to Jericho, the city of the palm trees, to their brethren: they returned to Samaria" — it is your enemies against whom you march, therefore show yourselves strong for the battle (Sifrei Devarim 192:2; Sotah 42a).
אל ירך לבבכם אל תיראו ואל תחפזו ואל תערצו LET NOT YOUR HEARTS FAINT; FEAR NOT, AND HURRY NOT PRECIPITATELY, NEITHER BE TERRIFIED BECAUSE OF THEM — These are four admonitions corresponding to four things which the kings of the nations do in battle: they bring their shields close together in order to strike them one against the other and thereby make a loud noise so that their opponents should flee precipitately; they trample the ground heavily with their horses — and make them neigh — in order to make a noise through the beating of their horses' hoofs; they themselves shout aloud and blow trumpets and other noisy instruments.
אל ירך לבבכם LET NOT YOUR HEARTS FAINT — through the neighing of the horses,
אל תיראו FEAR NOT from the noise made by the clashing of the shields,
ואל תחפזו AND HURRY NOT PRECIPITATELY at the sounds of the trumpets,
ואל תערצו NEITHER BE TERRIFIED by the noise of the shouting (Sifrei Devarim 192:3; Sotah 42).

Verse 4

כי ה' אלהיכם וגו' FOR THE LORD YOUR GOD [IS HE WHO GOETH WITH YOU] — They come to war relying on the conquering strength of human beings (lit., flesh and blood) but you come relying on the strength of the Omnipresent God! The Philistines once came to war relying on the strength of Goliath — what was his end? He fell and they fell with him (Sotah 42a).
ההלך עמכם [FOR THE LORD THY GOD] GOETH WITH THEE — this refers to the camp of the Holy Ark (the camp that has the Holy Ark in its midst, i.e. the camp of the Levites) (Sotah 42a).

Verse 5

ולא חנכו [WHAT MAN IS THERE THAT HATH BUILT A NEW HOUSE] AND HATH NOT DEDICATED IT — i.e. has not yet dwelt in it. The term חנך denotes beginning a thing (here, it means beginning to live in it; cf. Rashi on Genesis 14:14).
ואיש אחר יחנכנו [LEST HE DIE IN THE WAR] AND ANOTHER MAN DEDICATE IT — which is a matter that causes grief of mind.

Verse 6

ולא חללו [AND WHAT MAN IS THERE THAT HATH PLANTED A VINEYARD] AND HATH YET NOT EATEN OF IT — לא חללו means, has not yet redeemed it in the fourth year of its growth, for the fruits had either to be eaten in Jerusalem or to be given a non-holy character (חולין), by exchanging them for money and the money's worth to be consumed in Jerusalem (The phrase therefore means no more than: who hath not eaten of it).

Verse 7

פן ימות במלחמה [LET HIM GO AND RETURN] LEST HE DIE IN THE WAR — The meaning is: let him return so that he not die, for if he will not hearken to the words of the priests he deserves death (Sifrei Devarim 194:5).

Verse 8

ויספו השטרים AND THE BAILIFFS [SHALL SPEAK] FURTHER [UNTO THE PEOPLE] — Why does it here state: they shall speak further unto the people? The meaning is that they added this to the words of the priest, for the priest spoke and proclaimed from שמע ישראל (v. 3) to להושיע אתכם (end of 5:4), whilst the paragraphs beginning with מי האיש (v. 5) and with the second מי האיש (v. 6) and with the third מי האיש (v. 7) the priest said quietly and the officers proclaimed. This paragraph, the officers spoke and proclaimed, so that Scripture rightly introduces this last part by the word ויספו השוטרים (Sotah 43a).
הירא ורך הלבב [WHAT MAN IS THERE] WHO IS FEARFUL AND FAINT-HEARTED — Rabbi Akiba said, Take these words as what they literally imply; they mean that he cannot stand in the dense ranks of battle and look on a naked sword. Rabbi Jose, the Galilean, said that it means one who is afraid of the sins he has committed, and therefore Scripture gave him the opportunity of attributing his return home to his house, his vineyard, or his wife, in order to veil the motives of those who really returned because of the sins they had committed, so that people should not know they were great sinners, and whoever saw a person returning would say, "Perhaps he has built a house, or planted a vineyard or betrothed a wife" (Sotah 44a).

Verse 9

שרי צבאות [THEY SHALL APPOINT] OFFICERS OF THE HOSTS — This means that they shall place guards (זוקפין from זקף "to stand erect") in front of and behind them (the troops), with iron axes in their hands, and if anybody attempted to desert he (the guard) was empowered to chop off his legs. זוקפין are men who stood in the wings of the battle-line to raise (זקף) those who fall and to strengthen them by encouraging words: "Go back to the battle and do not flee, for flight is the first step to defeat" (Sifrei Devarim 198; Sotah 44).

Verse 10

כי תקרב אל עיר WHEN THOU APPROACHEST UNTO A CITY [TO FIGHT AGAINST IT] — Scripture is speaking of a war which is not obligatory upon them (as was the war against the seven nations of Canaan, referred to in v. 16), as it is distinctly stated in this section (v. 15) "Thus thou shalt do unto all the cities which are very far [from thee]" etc. (Sifrei Devarim 199:1).

Verse 11

כל העם הנמצא בה ALL THE PEOPLE THAT IS FOUND THEREIN [SHALL BE TRIBUTARIES] — all: even if you find in it persons belonging to the seven nations which you have been commanded to exterminate, you are allowed to keep them alive (Sifrei Devarim 200:2).
למס ועבדוך [ALL THE PEOPLE … SHALL BE] TRIBUTARIES [UNTO THEE], AND THEY SHALL SERVE THEE — You must not accept their surrender until they take upon themselves both the payment of tribute and servitude (one alone is not sufficient) (Sifrei Devarim 200:3).

Verse 12

ואם לא תשלים עמך ועשתה עמך מלחמה — Scripture tells you that if it does not make peace with you it will in the end make war against you (attack you) — if you leave it alone and go away (Sifrei Devarim 200:4). (The translation therefore is: AND IF IT WILL MAKE NO PEACE WITH THEE. IT WILL WAR AGAINST THEE).

וצרת עליה THEN THOU SHALT BESIEGE IT — This implies that you are entitled even to starve it out, to make it suffer thirst and to kill it (the inhabitants) by mortal diseases (Sifrei Devarim 200:5).

Verse 13

ונתנה ה' אלהיך בידך means THEN THE LORD THY GOD WILL GIVE IT INTO THY HANDS — if you have done all that is prescribed in this section the Lord will in the end give it into your hands (Sifrei Devarim 200:6).

Verse 14

והטף AND THE LITTLE ONES [… SHALT THOU TAKE UNTO THYSELF] — the male children, too. But how am I to understand (v. 13) "and thou shalt smite every male thereof"? As referring to the male adults (Sifrei Devarim 200:7).

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

כאשר צוך [BUT THOU SHALT DOOM THEM TO DESTRUCTION: THE HITTITES, … AND THE JEBUSITES,] AS [THE LORD THY GOD] HATH COMMANDED THEE — The words: "as God hath commanded thee" are intended to include the Girgashites (the seventh nation that is not mentioned here) (Sifrei Devarim 201:4).

Verse 18

למען אשר לא ילמדו [BUT THOU SHALT DOOM THEM TO DESTRUCTION …] THAT THEY TEACH YOU NOT TO DO [AFTER THEIR ABOMINATIONS] — Consequently if they repent of their abominations and wish to become proselytes you are allowed to accept them as such (Sifrei Devarim 202:1).

Verse 19

ימים [WHEN THOU SHALT BESIEGE A CITY] ימים DAYS — The plural implies at least two days,
רבים MANY must imply at least three days (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 15:25). From here they (the Rabbis) derived the law that the siege of a heathen city must not be commenced less than three days before the Sabbath, and it (this verse) teaches you that the opening up (the invitation to make) peace (v. 10) must be repeated two or three days, for so it states, (II Samuel 1:1) "And David abode two days (ימים שנים) in Ziklag" (Sifrei Devarim 200:4; Shabbat 19a). And Scripture is speaking here of a war which is not obligatory upon them (Sifrei Devarim 200:1).
כי האדם עץ השדה FOR IS THE TREE OF THE FIELD A MAN [THAT IT SHOULD BE BESIEGED BY THEE]? — כי has here the meaning of "possibly", "perhaps" (cf. Rashi on Exodus 23:5) — is the tree of the field perhaps a man who is able to withdraw within the besieged city from before you, that it should be chastised by the suffering of famine and thirst like the inhabitants of the city? Why should you destroy it?

Verse 20

עד רדתה [AND THOU SHALT BUILD BULWARKS AGAINST THE CITY …] UNTIL רדתה — This (the word רדתה) means "subduing", [and the meaning is, thou shalt besiege it until] it becomes submissive.

Chapter 21

Verse 1

Verse 2

ויצאו זקניך THEN THE ELDERS [AND THE JUDGES] SHALL GO FORTH — i.e. the distinguished amongst thy elders, these are the Great Sanhedrin (Sotah 44b).
ומדדו AND THEY SHALL MEASURE — from the place where the corpse lies, אל הערים אשר סביבת החלל UNTO THE CITIES WHICH ARE ROUND ABOUT HIM THAT IS SLAIN — in every direction, in order to ascertain which is the nearest.

Verse 3

Verse 4

אל נחל איתן UNTO A VALLEY WHICH IS איתן — which is hard; i.e. one that has never been tilled (Sifrei Devarim 207:2; Sotah 45b).
וערפו AND THEY SHALL STRIKE OFF [THE HEIFER'S] NECK — i.e. one breaks its neck with a hatchet. The Holy One, blessed be He, says, as it were, Let a heifer which is only one year old and which therefore has brought forth no fruits (no offspring) have its neck broken at a spot (the untilled valley) which has not brought forth fruits, to expiate for the murder of him whom they did not permit further to beget children (Sotah 46a).

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

ידינו לא שפכה [AND THEY SHALL ANSWER AND SAY,] OUR HANDS HAVE NOT SHED [THIS BLOOD] — But would it enter anyone's mind that the elders of the court are suspect of blood-shedding?! But the meaning of the declaration is: We never saw him and knowingly let him depart without food or escort (if we had seen him we would not have let him depart without these) (Sifrei Devarim 210:2; Sotah 45b). The priests thereupon say (next verse): כפר לעמך ישראל FORGIVE UNTO THY PEOPLE ISRAEL.

Verse 8

ונכפר להם הדם AND THE BLOOD SHALL BE PARDONED THEM — Scripture announces to them that when they have done this (the ceremony prescribed) their sin will be forgiven (Sotah 46a).

Verse 9

ואתה תבער BUT THOU SHALT PUT AWAY [THE GUILT OF INNOCENT BLOOD FROM AMONG YOU] — This teaches that if the murderer is found after the heifer's neck was broken he must nevertheless be put to death, — and this is what Scripture describes as הישר בעיני ה' RIGHT IN THE EYES OF THE LORD (cf. Sotah 47b; Ketubot 37b and Tosafot on Ketubot 37b:16.1 ואח"כ נמצא ההורג).

Verse 10

כי תצא למלחמה WHEN THOU GOEST FORTH TO WAR — Scripture is speaking here of a war that is not obligatory upon the Israelites (Sifrei Devarim 211:1), for in regard to a war that was waged against the inhabitants of Erez Israel, Scripture could not possibly say, "and thou hast captured captives", since it has already been stated regarding them, (Deuteronomy 20:16) "[But of the cities of those people...] you shall not allow any soul to live".
ושבית שביו AND THOU HAST CAPTURED CAPTIVES — These apparently redundant words are intended to include Canaanite people living in it (in a city outside Canaan), that it is allowed to capture them although they belong to the seven nations (Sifrei Devarim 211:4; Sotah 35b).

Verse 11

אשת [AND THOU SEEST AMONG THE CAPTIVES] A WOMAN — even if she be a married woman (Sifrei Devarim 211:7; Kiddushin 21b).
ולקחת לך לאשה [AND THOU DELIGHTEST IN HER,] THAT THOU WOULDEST TAKE HER FOR THY WIFE) — Scripture is speaking (makes this concession) only in view of man's evil inclination (his carnal desires) (Kiddushin 21b). For if the Holy One, blessed be He, would not permit her to him as a wife, he would nevertheless marry her although she would then be forbidden to him. However, if he does marry her, in the end he will hate her, for Scripture writes immediately afterwards, (v. 15) "If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, etc." and ultimately he will beget a refractory and rebellious son by her (v. 18). It is for this reason that these sections are put in juxtaposition (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Teitzei 1).

Verse 12

ועשת את צפרניה means, AND SHE SHALL LET GROW HER NAILS — She must let them grow, so that she should becomes repulsive to her captor (cf. Sifrei Devarim 212:4; Yevamot 48a; see also Rashi on Genesis 1:7 and our Note thereon).

Verse 13

והסירה את שמלת שביה AND SHE SHALL REMOVE THE RAIMENT OF HER CAPTIVITY — the reason is because these are fine clothes, for the women of the heathen peoples adorned themselves in time of war in order to lure others (the enemy) to unchastity with them (Sifrei Devarim 213:1).
וישבה בביתך AND SHE SHALL DWELL IN "THY" HOUSE — [not in the women's apartments, but] in the house which he constantly uses: when he goes in he stumbles upon her, when he leaves he stumbles upon her (i.e. he cannot avoid meeting her constantly and the novelty of her beauty wears off); he sees her endless crying, sees her neglected appearance — and all this in order that she should become repulsive to him (Sifrei Devarim 213:2).
ובכתה את אביה AND SHE SHALL WEEP FOR HER FATHER [AND HER MOTHER A FULL MONTH] — Why all this? In order to make a contrast — that while the Jewish woman (the captor's Jewish wife) is gladsome, she should be

downhearted, while the Jewish woman adorns herself, this one should bear a neglected appearance (Sifrei Devarim 213:5).

Verse 14

והיה אם לא חפצת בה AND IT SHALL BE, IF THOU ART NOT PLEASED WITH HER — Scripture tell you that you will in the end hate her (Sifrei Devarim 214:1).
לא תתעמר בה means; THOU SHALT NOT USE HER AS A SLAVE. In the Persian language slavery and servitude is termed עימראה. I learned this from the work of R. Moses the Preacher.

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

פי שנים A DOUBLE PORTION — i.e. a portion equal to those of two brothers together (Sifrei Devarim 217:2-4).
בכל אשר ימצא לו [BUT HE SHALL ACKNOWLEDGE THE SON OF THE HATED FOR THE FIRSTBORN, BY GIVING HIM A DOUBLE PORTION] OF ALL THAT SHALL BE FOUND WITH HIM — From here the Rabbis derived the law that the firstborn does not receive a double share of what is due to come after the death of the father (as, e.g., a debt or a legacy that were payable to his father on a certain date, before which, however, the father died — technically termed ראוי), as he does of what is actually held in possession by the father (מוחזק) (Sifrei Devarim 217:6; Bekhorot 51b).

Verse 18

סורר (from the root סור to deviate) means, one who deviates from the proper path of life.
ומורה means, one who is disobedient to the words of his father, of the same meaning as ממרים in the phrase (Deuteronomy 9:7) "ממרים הייתם", "ye have been rebellious".
ויסרו אתו AND THEY SHALL CHASTISE HIM — admonish him in the presence of three people, and if he still remains refractory they cause him to be lashed through the court (Sanhedrin 71a; cf. Sifrei Devarim 218:11). The refractory and rebellious son is not liable to the death penalty until he proves to be a thief and eats at one meal a "tartemar" (a weight of half a Maneh) flesh and drinks half a Log wine, for it is said of him, (v. 20) זולל וסבא, and in another passage (Proverbs 23:20) it says: "Do not be among wine-guzzlers (בְּסֹבְאֵי-יָיִן), among gluttonous eaters of meat" (Sanhedrin 70a; cf. Sifrei Devarim 219:4). — The refractory and rebellious son is put to death on account of the final course his life must necessarily take (not because his present offence is deserving death); — the Torah has fathomed his ultimate disposition: in the end he will squander his fathers property and seeking in vain for the pleasures to which he has been accustomed, he will take his stand on the crossroads and rob people, and in some way or other make, himself liable to the death penalty. Says the Torah, "Let him die innocent of such crimes, and let him not die guilty of them" (Sifrei Devarim 220:3; Sanhedrin 72a).

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

וכל ישראל ישמעו ויראו AND ALL ISRAEL SHALL HEAR AND FEAR — From here we derive the law that his execution requires public announcement by the court: "The man named so-and-so is stoned because he was a refractory and rebellious son" (Sanhedrin 89a).

Verse 22

וכי יהיה באיש חטא משפט מות AND IF THERE BE IN A MAN A SIN DESERVING THE JUDGMENT OF DEATH — The juxtaposition of these sections (this and that of the rebellious son) tells us that if father and mother spare him (the rebellious son), he will in the latter end turn to mischief and commit sins for which he will become liable to the death penalty by the court (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Teitzei 1).
ותלית אתו על עץ [AND IF THERE BE IN A MAN A SIN DESERVING THE JUDGMENT OF DEATH] THOU SHALT HANG HIM ON A TREE — Our Rabbis said, All those who have to be put to death by stoning must afterwards be hanged, for it is said here (v. 23) "for cursing of God ends in hanging", and we are told that one who curses God is punished with stoning (cf. Leviticus 24:15—16; Sanhedrin 45b).

Verse 23

כי קללת אלהים תלוי FOR HE THAT IS HANGED IS A קללת אלהים — i.e., a degradation of the Divine King, for man is made in His image and the Israelites are His children. A parable! It may be compared to the case of two twin brothers who very closely resembled each other: one became king and the other was arrested for robbery and was hanged. Whoever saw him on the gallows thought that the king was hanged (Sanhedrin 46b). — Wherever the term קללה occurs in Scripture it has the meaning of bonding in light esteem and despising, as e.g., (1 Kings 2:8) "[Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim] who cursed me with a severe curse (קללני קללה נמרצת)" (cf. II Samuel 16:5—8).

Chapter 22

Verse 1

והתעלמת [THOU SHALT NOT SEE ANY OF THY BROTHER'S HERD … GO ASTRAY] AND HIDE THYSELF [FROM THEM] — i.e. one, as it were closes his eyes tight as though one does not see it.
והתעלמת … לא תראה THOU SHALT NOT SEE … AND HIDE THYSELF [FROM THEM] — "thou shalt not see it, that thou hide thyself from it" (i.e. you see it only to hide thyself from it), this is the plain sense of the verse. Our Rabbis, however, said that the omission of the particle לא before the verb והתעלמת (one would expect לא תתעלם … כי תראה) suggests: There are times when you may hide yourself from it, etc. (Sifrei Devarim 225:4; Bava Metzia 30a).

Verse 2

עד דרש אחיך [AND IT SHALL BE WITH THEE] UNTIL THY BROTHER ENQUIRES [FOR IT] — But would it ever enter your mind that one could give it back before he enquires for it (Scripture distinctly states that you do not know to whom the animal belongs)?! But the meaning of the verse is: Thou shalt make diligent enquiries of him that he should not be a fraudulent claimant (Bava Metzia 27b. 28a; cf. Sifrei Devarim 223:4).
והשבתו לו AND THOU SHALT RESTORE IT TO HIM — it is necessary that there be some restoration — that it (the animal) should not eat in your house to its own value, and you claim this from him (in which case there is no actual restoration of what has been lost). From here, they (the Rabbis) derived the law: Whatever works and requires food (as, for instance, oxen, etc., the cost of whose food is set off by the value of its labour) should work and eat; whatever does not work but requires feeding (as, for instance, sheep) should be sold and the money restored to the man who lost it (Bava Metzia 28b).

Verse 3

לא תוכל להתעלם THOU MAYEST NOT HIDE THYSELF — i.e. You must not cover your eyes, pretending not to see it.

Verse 4

הקם תקים [THOU SHALT NOT SEE THY BROTHER'S ASS OR ANY OF HIS HERD FALL DOWN BY THE WAY, AND HIDE THYSELF FROM THEM] THOU SHALT SURELY RAISE UP — This refers to the duty of loading — to re-load the burden that fell from it.
עמו [THOU SHALT SURELY UPLOAD] WITH HIM — i.e. with the owner. But if he goes aside and sits down and says to him, "Since it is a duty for you to load it, if you want to load, go ahead and load!" — ["I" am not commanded to do it"], he is exempt from doing it (cf. Bava Metzia 32a).

Verse 5

לא יהיה כלי גבר על אשה THE APPAREL OF A MAN SHALL NOT BE ON A WOMAN — so that she look like a man, in order to consort with men, for this can only be for the purpose of adultery (unchastity) (cf. Sifrei Devarim 226:1; Nazir 59a).
ולא ילבש גבר שמלת אשה NEITHER SHALL A MAN PUT ON A WOMAN'S GARMENT in order to go and stay unnoticed amongst women. Another explanation of the second part of the text is: it implies that a man should not remove the hair of the genitals and the hair beneath the arm-pit (Nazir 59a).
כי תועבת FOR [ALL THAT DO SO ARE] AN ABOMINATION [UNTO THE LORD THY GOD] — This implies that the Torah forbids only the wearing of a garb that leads to abomination (unchastity) (cf. Sifrei Devarim 226:1).

Verse 6

כי יקרא IF [A BIRD'S NEST] CHANCE TO BE [BEFORE THEE IN THE WAY … THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE MOTHER WITH THE YOUNG] — If it chance to be, this excludes that which is always ready at hand (in thy court yard) (Sifrei Devarim 227:1; Chullin 139a).
לא תקח האם THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE MOTHER so long as she is sitting upon the young.

Verse 7

למען ייטב לך וגו׳ THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH THEE etc. — If in the case of an easy command which involves no monetary loss, Scripture states "Do this in order that it may be well with thee and thou mayest prolong thy

days", it follows à fortiori that this at least will be the grant of the reward for the fulfilment of commands which are more difficult to observe (Chullin 142a).

Verse 8

כי תבנה בית חדש WHEN THOU BUILDEST A NEW HOUSE, [THEN THOU SHALT MAKE A BATTLEMENT FOR THY ROOF] — If thou hast fulfilled the command of שלוח הקן (of letting a mother bird go when the nest is rifled), you will in the end be privileged to build a new house and to fulfill the command of "making a guard-rail", for one good deed brings another good deed in its train, and you will attain to a vineyard (v. 9), fields (v. 10) and fine garments (vv. 11—12). It is for this reason (to suggest this) that these sections are put in juxtaposition (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Teitzei 1).
מעקה means, a fence around the roof. Onkelos renders it by תיקא; the fencing is like a casing (תיק) which guards things that are within it.
כי יפל הנפל [THAT THOU BRING NOT BLOOD UPON THY HOUSE] IF ANY MAN FALL FROM THENCE — (The words may be taken to mean: if he that is to fall (הנופל) falls from it). This suggests: this man deserved to fall to his death (on account of some crime he had committed), nevertheless his death should not be occasioned by your agency, for meritorious things are brought about through the agency of good men and bad things only through the agency of evil men (Sifrei Devarim 229:7).

Verse 9

כלאים [THOU SHALT NOT SOW THY VINEYARD] WITH DIVERSE KINDS OF SEEDS — i.e. wheat and barley together with kernels of grapes with one and the same hand-throw (Berachot 22a; Kiddushin 39a; Chullin 82b).
פן תקדש LEST IT BECOME קדש — Take it as the Targum does: lest it become unclean (unfit for use); to anything for which a man has repugnance to come into contact with, be it on account of its sublimity as, for instance, holy things, or be it on account of some bad quality, as, for instance, something that is forbidden, the term קדוש is appropriate, as, in the latter sense, e.g., (Isaiah 65:5) "Come not near to me for I make thee קדוש".
[המלאה — This is the fullness and increase which the seed produces].

Verse 10

לא תחרש בשור ובחמור THOU SHALT NOT PLOUGH WITH AN OX AND WITH AN ASS [TOGETHER] — The same law applies to any two different kinds of animals in existence; the same law applies also to merely driving them together (when not ploughing) whilst they are yoked together as a pair carrying any load (Sifrei Devarim 232:1-2; cf. Kilayim 8:2 and 3; Bava Metzia 8b).

Verse 11

שעטנז is an expression for a mixture. Our Rabbis explained it to mean a material that is calendered (pressed, שוע), or woven (טווי), or twisted (נוז) together (Sifrei Devarim 232:1); (שעטנז is taken to be an abbreviation of these words; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 19:19 and our Note thereon).

Verse 12

גדלים תעשה לך THOU SHALT MAKE THEE TASSELS [UPON THE FOUR CORNERS OF THY VESTURE] — be they even from a mixture of wool and linen; for this reason Scripture puts them (the prohibition of שעטנז and the command of ציצית) in juxtaposition (Yevamot 4a).

Verse 13

ובא אליה ושנאה [IF ANY MAN TAKE A WIFE] AND COME UNTO HER AND HATE HER, the end will be,

Verse 14

ושם לה עלילת דברים that HE WILL IMPUTE ACTIONS UPON HER BY MERE WORDS (i.e. he will slander her); one sin brings another sin in its train: if he transgresses the prohibition "thou shalt not hate [thy fellow]" (Leviticus 19:17), the end will be that he will fall into slander (cf. Sifrei Devarim 235:3).
את האשה הזאת THIS WOMAN — Hence we derive the law that one must not speak anything to the judge except in the presence of the opposing party (Sifrei Devarim 235:6).

Verse 15

אבי הנערה ואמה [THEN SHALL] THE FATHER OF THE DAMSEL, AND HER MOTHER [TAKE AND BRING FORTH etc.] — Let those who have reared this depraved child (lit., "evil plant") be exposed to contempt because of her (Sifrei Devarim 235:9).

Verse 16

ואמר אבי הנערה AND THE DAMSEL'S FATHER SHALL SAY [UNTO THE ELDERS] — although both parents appear before them, yet the father alone shall speak — this teaches that a woman is not allowed to speak in the presence of her husband (if he, too, is concerned in the matter) (Sifrei Devarim 235:10).

Verse 17

ופרשו השמלה AND THEY SHALL SPREAD THE CLOTH [BEFORE THE ELDERS OF THE CITY] — This is a figurative expression: they must make the matter as white (as clear) as a sheet (Sifrei Devarim 237:1; Ketubot 46a).

Verse 18

ויסרו אתו [AND THE ELDERS … SHALL TAKE THE MAN] AND CHASTISE HIM — i.e. with lashes (Sifrei Devarim 238:2; Ketubot 46a; cf. Onkelos).

Verse 19

Verse 20

ואם אמת היה הדבר BUT IF THE THING BE TRUE — proven by evidence of witnesses and after legal warning that she had committed adultery after her betrothal (Ketubot 44b).

Verse 21

אל פתח בית אביה [THEN THEY SHALL BRING THE DAMSEL] TO THE ENTRANCE OF HER FATHER'S HOUSE — suggesting: "See what a child (lit., a plant) you have reared!" (Ketubot 45a).

אנשי עירה [AND] THE MEN OF HER CITY [SHALL OVERWHELM HER WITH STONES] — This means, the witnesses shall stone her, all the men of her city standing by (Sifrei Devarim 240:1; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 24:14).
לזנות בית אביה TO PLAY THE WHORE "IN" HER FATHER'S HOUSE — The word בית is equivalent to בבית.

Verse 22

ומתו גם שניהם THEN THEY SHALL BOTH OF THEM DIE — The redundant words גם שניהם are intended to exclude a case of unnatural intercourse from which the woman derives no gratification (Sifrei Devarim 242:4; Sanhedrin 66b). גם is intended to include those persons who commit adultery with one of this pair after them (i.e. after this pair had been found guilty) (Sifrei Devarim 242:5). Another explanation of גם שניהם is: these words are intended to include in the death penalty the embryo: that if the woman was pregnant the execution is not deferred until after she gives birth (cf. Targum Jonathan on; Arakhin 7a).

Verse 23

ומצאה איש בעיר [IF A DAMSEL THAT IS A VIRGIN BE BETROTHED UNTO A MAN] AND A MAN FIND HER IN THE CITY [AND LIE WITH HER] — (Because he found her outdoors) therefore he lay with her: a breach in the wall invites the thief; if she had remained at home (as becomes a chaste Jewish girl) this would not have happened to her (Sifrei Devarim 242:2-3).

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

כי כאשר יקום וגו׳ FOR AS WHEN A MAN RISETH [AGAINST HIS FELLOW MAN, AND SLAYETH HIM, EVEN SO IS THIS THING] — According to its plain sense the following is what it implies: there is in the damsel no sin deserving death, because she was coerced and he, (the man) attacked her with violence, just as when a man attacks his fellowman to kill him. — Our Rabbis, however, gave it (the verse) a Halachic interpretation as follows: Behold, this simile is intended to elucidate the law in question but at the same time turns out to be itself elucidated by that law (lit., this comes as a teacher and is found to be a learner) (Sanhedrin 73a).

Chapter 23

Verse 1

לא יקח — This does not mean "he shall not take" but "he cannot take" his father's wife: there can be no question of a legal marriage for him in regard to her, because the marriage ceremony (קדושין) has no legal hold on her (cannot make her his wife: it is no marriage) (Kiddushin 67b; cf. Rashi on Kiddushin 67b s. v. לא יקח)
ולא יגלה כנף אביו AND HE SHALL NOT UNCOVER HIS FATHER'S SKIRT — This refers to the שומרת יבם of his father (the widow of his father's brother who died without issue, and who is waiting (שומרת) for her brother-in-law

(יבם) either to marry her or to put her through the ceremony of release, חליצה), who is thus destined for his father. But has he not already been prohibited about her (i.e. forbidden to marry her) on account of the law (Leviticus 18:14) "the nakedness of thy father's brother [thou shalt not uncover]"?! But the prohibition is repeated here in order to make him transgress two negative commands if he takes her (Yevamot 4a), and in order to put into juxtaposition to it the law (v. 2) "one born of incest or adultery (ממזר) shall not come [into the assembly of the Lord]", and thereby to teach that one is termed ממזר only if he is born from those liable to the penalty of excision on account of the intercourse between them, as is the case with one who take's his father's יבם שומרת, who is forbidden to him under the penalty of כרת as אשת אחי אביו; cf. Leviticus 18:14 and Leviticus 18:29 (but not if he was born of a woman intercourse with whom involves only flagellation), and it logically follows that the term applies also to one born from those liable to one of the death penalties by sentence of the court, for amongst the cases of forbidden intercourse there is none punishable with death by the sentence of the court which does not involve the penalty of excision (if it was not preceded by a warning) (Yevamot 49a; cf. also Rashi on Kiddushin 67b s. v. מהנ"מ).

Verse 2

פצוע דכא means, one whose stones have been bruised (פצוע) or crushed (דכא) (Sifrei Devarim 247:1).
וכרות שפכה means, one whose membrum has a cut in it, so that it no longer forcibly ejects a continuous flow of sperm but it pours it forth slowly, and he thus cannot beget children (Sifrei Devarim 247:2; Yevamot 75b).

Verse 3

לא יבא ממזר בקהל ה׳ ONE BORN IN INCEST OR ADULTERY SHALL NOT COME INTO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE LORD — i.e. he shall not marry an Israelite woman (Yevamot 78b).

Verse 4

לא יבא עמוני AN AMONITE [OR MOABITE] SHALL NOT COME [INTO THE ASSEMBLY OF THE LORD] — i.e. he shall not marry an Israelite woman (Yevamot 77b).

Verse 5

על דבר may be translated BECAUSE OF THE WORD — i.e. because of the advice which they gave you in order to entice you into sin (Sifrei Devarim 250:1).
בדרך IN THE WAY — when you were in a state of exhaustion (Sifrei Devarim 250:2).

Verse 6

Verse 7

לא תדרש שלמם THOU SHALT NOT SEEK THEIR PEACE [NOR THEIR GOOD] — Since it states, (v. 17) "He (the runaway slave) shall abide with you, even among you, … [where it shall be good for him]" one might think that this (a Moabite or Ammonite runaway slave) should also be treated likewise, therefore Scripture states לא תדרש שלמם THOU SHALT NOT SEEK THEIR PEACE [NOR THEIR GOOD] (Sifrei Devarim 251:2).

Verse 8

לא תתעב אדמי THOU SHALT NOT ABHOR AN EDOMITE utterly, although it would be proper for you to abhor him because he came out against thee with the sword (Numbers 20:18—20).
לא תתעב מצרי THOU SHALT NOT ABHOR AN EGYPTIAN all in all (utterly), although they cast your male children into the river. And what is the reason that you should not abhor him utterly? Because they were your hosts in time of need (during Joseph's reign when the neighbouring countries suffered from famine); therefore although they sinned against you do not utterly abhor him, but —

Verse 9

בנים אשר יולדו להם דור שלישי וגומר THE CHILDREN THAT ARE BORN UNTO THEM [MAY COME INTO THE ASSEMBLY] IN THEIR THIRD GENERATION — other nations, however, since they did not sin against you may be admitted at once if they acknowledge the tenets of Judaim. — Thus you learn that he who causes a man to sin does him greater harm than if he kills him, for he who kills him, kills him only as regards this world, while he who causes him to sin puts him out of this world and the world to come. Therefore Edom, though he met them with the sword was not to be abhorred utterly, and similarly the Egyptians who drowned them (their male children), while those (the Ammonites and Moabites) who caused them to sin were to be utterly abhorred (Sifrei Devarim 252:3).

Verse 10

כי תצא וגו׳ ונשמרת WHEN [THE HOST] GOETH FORTH [AGAINST THINE ENEMIES], THEN KEEP THEE [FROM EVERY EVIL THING] — because Satan accuses men in time of danger (Jerusalem Talmud Shabbat 2:6; Midrash Tanchuma, Vayigash 1 on Genesis 42:4; cf. Rashi on that verse and our Note thereon).

Verse 11

מקרה לילה [IF THERE BE AMONG YOU ANY MAN THAT IS NOT CLEAN BY REASON OF] UNCLEANNESS THAT CHANCETH HIM BY NIGHT — By night: Scripture speaks of what usually occurs (but the law applies also if the uncleanness happens at day time) (Sifrei Devarim 255:3).
ויצא אל מחוץ למחנה THEN HE SHALL GO ABROAD OUT OF THE CAMP — This is a command,
לא יבא אל תוך המחנה HE SHALL NOT COME WITHIN THE CAMP — This is a prohibition (Sifrei Devarim 255:4). He is forbidden to enter the "camp of the Levites", and all the more so, the "camp of the Shechinah". (cf. Sifrei Devarim 255:5; Pesachim 68a and Rashi on Numbers 5:2).

Verse 12

והיה לפנות ערב BUT IT SHALL BE WHEN EVENING COMETH ON, [HE SHALL LAVE HIMSELF WITH WATER] — He should immerse himself close before the setting of the sun, for under no circumstances is he clean without having waited for the sunset (cf. Sifrei Devarim 256:2).

Verse 13

ויד תהיה לך THOU SHALT HAVE A יד [WITHOUT THE CAMP] — Understand the word יד as the Targum does: ואתר (and you shall have a place). Similar is, (Numbers 2:17) "Each man at his place (ידו)" (Sifrei Devarim 257:1).

מחוץ למחנה WITHOUT THE CAMP — i.e. outside the area enclosed by the clouds of glory.

Verse 14

על אזנך [AND THOU SHALT HAVE A PIN] על אזנך — i.e. besides (על, "in addition to", not "upon") your other implements.
אזנך has the same meaning as זין in the phrase כלי זין.

Verse 15

ולא יראה בך THAT HE SEE NOT IN THEE — that the Holy One, blessed be He see not in thee ערות דבר A NAKEDNESS OF ANYTHING.

Verse 16

לא תסגיר עבד THOU SHALT NOT DELIVER [UNTO HIS LORD] THE SERVANT [WHO IS ESCAPED FROM HIS LORD UNTO THEE] — Understand this as the Targum has it: עבד עממין the servant of the heathens. Another explanation is: that it implies even a Canaanite servant belonging to an Israelite who fled from outside the Land (from a foreign country) into the Land of Israel (Gittin 45a).

Verse 17

Verse 18

לא תהיה קדשה THERE SHALL BE NO קדשה [OF THE DAUGHTERS OF ISRAEL] — i.e. a prostitute, — one who is devoted to and ever ready for illicit intercourse (cf. Rashi on Genesis 38:21 s. v. הקדשה; Rashi on Exodus 19:22 s. v. יתקדשו).
AND THERE SHALL BE NO קדש (OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL] — one ever ready for pederasty (Sanhedrin 54b). Onkelos, however, rendered the verse by לא תהא אתתא מבני ישראל לגבר עבר, "A woman of the daughters of Israel shall not become the wife of a slave". Such a woman may also be termed a קדשה. because she, too, becomes a prostitute to illicit intercourse, since no marriage ceremony with her (קידושין) can for him have a hold on her (can be a valid ceremony), — for you see, they (the slaves) are compared to asses, as it is said, (Genesis 22:5), "Abide ye here עם החמור", which is taken to mean (Kiddushin 68a), "[Abide ye here] עם החמור", "O ye peop1e who are like asses". And the second half of the verse Onkelos renders by ולא יסב גברא מבני ישראל אתתא אמה "and no man of Israel shall marry a bondwoman", which is also an adequate translation, since he, too, becomes a קדש, "one devoted to illicit intercourse" through her, since every intercourse with her is an illicit intercourse, since his marriage to her is not binding (cf. Rashi on Kiddushin 69a s. v. או דיעבד קאמר).

Verse 19

אתנן זונה [THOU SHALT NOT BRING] THE PROSTITUTION HIRE OF A WHORE [… INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD, THY GOD FOR ANY VOW] — This means, if he (the paramour) gave her a lamb as the hire of her prostitution it is unfitted for sacrifice (Sifrei Devarim 261:1; Temurah 29a).
ומחיר כלב [THOU SHALT NOT BRING …] THE PRICE OF A DOG [INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD …], if one has exchanged a lamb for a dog (Sifrei Devarim 261:2; Temurah 30a).
גם שניהם FOR EVEN BOTH THESE ARE [ABOMINATION UNTO THE LORD, THY GOD] — The words גם שניהם taken as גם שנוייהם are intended to include in the

prohibition the things into which they (whatever is given as hire) are changed, as, e.g., if he gave the woman wheat and she made it into flour (Temurah 30b).

Verse 20

לא תשיך implies a prohibition addressed to the borrower that he should not pay interest to the creditor (cf. Sifrei Devarim 262:1; Bava Metzia 75b) [and afterwards (Leviticus 25:37) follows the prohibition addressed to the creditor, "thou shalt not give him thy money upon interest"].

Verse 21

לנכרי תשיך UNTO AN ALIEN THOU MAYEST LEND UPON INTEREST (according to Rashi: TO AN ALIEN THOU MAYEST PAY INTEREST) — but not to thy brother. Such a prohibition which is not plainly stated but can only be drawn by inference from a positive command is itself regarded only as a positive command — so that one who pays interest to his brother transgresses two negative commands: לא תשיך in v. 20, ולאחיך לא תשיך in v. 21 and a positive command ולאחיך — לנכרי תשיך (cf. Sifrei Devarim 263:1; Bava Metzia 70b; also cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 14:20).

Verse 22

לא תאחר לשלמו [WHEN THOU SHALT VOW A VOW UNTO THE LORD THY GOD] THOU SHALT NOT DELAY TO PAY IT — beyond three festivals after the vow has been made. Our Rabbis have deduced it (the fact that one does not transgress the prohibition before three festivals elapse) from a Scriptural text (Rosh Hashanah 4b).

Verse 23

Verse 24

מוצא שפתיך תשמר THAT WHICH HATH GONE OUT OF THY LIPS THOU SHALT KEEP — This is intended to add a positive command to the prohibition of delaying one's vows (mentioned in the previous verse) (Rosh Hashanah 6a).

Verse 25

כי תבא בכרם רעך WHEN THOU COMEST INTO THE VINEYARD OF THY FELLOW MAN, [THEN THOU MAYEST EAT GRAPES AT THY FILL] — Scripture is speaking of a laborer (who is engaged in gathering in the grapes, but not of one who is doing other work in the vineyard, nor of one who enters the vineyard with no intention to do work; cf. Rashi in the next passage) (Bava Metzia 87b).
כנפשך means as much as you like.
שבעך AT THY FILL — but not excessive eating (Bava Metzia 87b).
ואל כליך לא תתן BUT THOU SHALT NOT PUT ANY IN THY VESSEL — From here we may derive that Scripture is referring only to the period of the vintage, to the time when thou puttest grapes into the owner's vessel, — then thou mayest eat but not put any into thy vessel; but if he comes to hoe or to weed (i.e. to do other work than harvesting) he must not eat of the grapes (Bava Metzia 89b).

Verse 26

כי תבא בקמת רעך WHEN THOU COMEST INTO THE STANDING CORN OF THY FELLOW MAN [THOU MAYEST PLUCK THE EARS WITH THINE HAND] — In this case too, Scripture is referring to a labourer in the field (cf. Sifrei Devarim 267:1; Bava Metzia 87b).

Chapter 24

Verse 1

כי מצא בה ערות דבר [WHEN A MAN HATH TAKEN A WIFE, AND MARRIED HER, AND IT COMES TO PASS THAT SHE FINDS NO FAVOUR IN HIS EYES.] BECAUSE HE HATH FOUND SOME SCANDALOUS THING IN HER; [THEN LET HIM WRITE A BILL OF DIVORCEMENT … AND SEND HER AWAY …] — it is his duty to divorce her because she should not find favour in his eyes (cf. Gittin 90b).

Verse 2

לאיש אחר [AND WHEN SHE IS GONE OUT OF HIS HOUSE, AND HATH GONE AND BECOME] "ANOTHER" MAN'S WIFE — He is "another" (a different) man, not one of a pair with the first: he turned the wicked woman out of his house, whilst this man hath taken her into his house (Gittin 90b).

Verse 3

ושנאה האיש האחרון AND IF THE LATTER HUSBAND HATE HER — (these words lit. mean: and the other will hate her): Scripture tells you that in the end he will hate her and divorce her, and if not, she will bury him (be the cause of his death) as it states "or if the latter husband die" (Sifrei Devarim 270:4-5).

Verse 4

אחרי אשר הטמאה [HER FIRST HUSBAND … MAY NOT TAKE HER AGAIN TO BE HIS WIFE] AFTER THAT SHE IS DEFILED — these words are intended to include in the prohibition a faithless wife (סוטה) who had been in seclusion with another man (Sifrei Devarim 270:10; Yevamot 11b).

Verse 5

אשה חדשה [WHEN A MAN HATH TAKEN] A NEW WIFE [HE SHALL NOT GO OUT TO THE HOST] — i.e., one that is new to him, even though she be a widow; but it excludes the case of one who re-marries his divorced wife (Sifrei Devarim 271:1; Sotah 44a; cf., however, Targum Jonathan).
ולא יעבר lit., NEITHER SHALL PASS UPON HIM (i.e., be obligatory upon him) any army matter,
לכל דבר AS REGARDS ANYTHING that is a requirement of the army: not to supply water and food, nor to repair the roads, whilst those who returned from the battle array at the bidding of the priest, e.g., one who had built a new house and had not yet dedicated it, or one who had betrothed a woman and had not yet taken her to wife (Deuteronomy 20:5—7), are bound to supply water and food and to repair roads (Sifrei Devarim 271:2; Sotah 44a).
יהיה לביתו [HE SHALL BE FREE] AT HOME (or, as it may be literally translated: [FREE] FOR HIS HOUSE) — i.e., also on account of his new house (not only on account of his recent marriage, as stated in the text): if he has built a new house and only just dedicated it (not lived in it a full year), and similarly, if he has planted a vineyard and has only just begun to eat of its fruits (not enjoyed its produce the full

fourth year), he need not leave his house for the requirements of war. This Halacha is derived from the text as follows:
יהיה HE SHALL BE — This is intended to include the vineyard (Sifrei Devarim 271:4),
לביתו This is the mention of "his house" (Sifrei Devarim 271:3).
ושמח means HE SHALL GLADDEN [HIS WIFE], its correct Targum rendering therefore is: וְיַחֲדֵי יָת אִיתְּתֵהּ which expresses this; One who reads in the Targum וְיַחֲדֵי עִם אִיתְּתֵהּ "he shall rejoice with his wife" is in error, for this is not the Targum equivalent of וְשִׂמַּח (Piel) but of וְשָׂמַח (Kal).

Verse 6

לא יחבל NO MAN SHALL TAKE [THE LOWER OR THE UPPER MILLSTONE] AS PLEDGE — i.e. if one comes to demand a pledge through the court for his debt he should not take as a pledge anything by which food is prepared (Bava Metzia 113b, 115a).
רחים is the lower,
ורכב is the upper millstone.

Verse 7

כי ימצא IF [A MAN] BE FOUND [STEALING …] — Found when doing so by witnesses and after legal warning. This, too, is the meaning in all cases where a form of the verb מצא is used in the Torah, under similar circumstances (Mekhilta; Sifrei Devarim 273:1).
והתעמר בו AND TREATS HIM AS A SLAVE — he is not liable to the death penalty until he uses him as a slave (cf. Sifrei Devarim 273:5; Sanhedrin 85b).

Verse 8

השמר בנגע צרעת TAKE HEED IN THE AFFLICTION OF LEPROSY — take heed that you pluck not out the symptoms of uncleanness (cf. Leviticus ch. XIII.), nor cut out the leprous spot (Makkot 22a).
ככל אשר יורו אתכם ACCORDING TO ALL THAT [THE PRIESTS …] SHALL TEACH YOU — whether to place the leper in quarantine, or to declare him definitely unclean or clean.

Verse 9

זכור את אשר עשה ה' אלהיך למרים REMEMBER WHAT THE LORD THY GOD DID UNTO MIRIAM — if you wish to guard yourself against being stricken with leprosy, do not speak slander! Remember what was done unto Miriam who spoke slander against her brother and was stricken with a leprous plague! (cf. Sifrei Devarim 275:1).

Verse 10

כי תשה ברעך means, WHEN THOU EXACTEST A DEBT FROM THY FELLOW MAN;
משאת מאומה means, A DEBT OF ANYTHING (whatever it may be).

Verse 11

Verse 12

לא תשכב בעבטו THOU SHALT NOT SLEEP IN HIS PLEDGE — This means, thou shalt not go to sleep having his pledge with thee (Sifrei Devarim 277:2; Bava Metzia 111b).

Verse 13

כבוא השמש [THOU SHALT RESTORE HIM THE PLEDGE] WHEN THE SUN GOETH DOWN — if it be a night garment; whilst if it be a garment worn during the day restore it to him in the morning. This, indeed, has already been written in the section beginning with the words ואלה המשפטים (Exodus 22:25) "Restore it unto him till the going down of the sun" which means: restore it unto him for the whole day and at nightfall you may take it again [till the daybreak of the next morning] (Bava Metzia 114b; cf. Rashi on Exodus 22.25.2 and Note thereon).
וברכך AND HE WILL BLESS THEE — and even if he will not bless thee, in any case, ולך תהיה צדקה IT SHALL BE RIGHTEOUSNESS UNTO THEE [BEFORE THE LORD THY GOD] (Sifrei Devarim 277:4).

Verse 14

לא תעשק שכיר THOU SHALT NOT WRONG ANY HIRED SERVANT — But has not this already been stated in Leviticus 19:13? But it is repeated here to make one transgress in respect of the hired, servant who is poor (i.e., if he wrongs such a person) two negative commands, for the meaning of the text here is: thou shalt not suppress the wages of an hired servant who is poor and needy. (The meaning is not: thou shalt not wrong a hired servant, the poor and the needy). As to the well-to-do hired servant one has already been prohibited to wrong him (Leviticus 19:13): "thou shalt not wrong thy neighbour" (Bava Metzia 61a).
אביון is one who longs for everything, (lacks all the necessities of life; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 15:4).
מגרך [WHETHER HE BE OF THY BRETHREN, OR] OF ANY STRANGERS — this refers to a "proselyte of righteousness" (who embraces the entire Jewish Faith out of conviction) (Sifrei Devarim 278:4),
בשערך [STRANGERS THAT ARE] WITHIN THY GATES — this refers to a stranger [who has undertaken not to worship idols] but eats carrion (who may reside in the land of Israel) (Sifrei Devarim 278:5),
אשר בארצך [OF ANY STRANGERS] THAT ARE IN THY LAND — this is intended to include in the prohibition of withholding what is due to one's neighbor the payment for using his animals or utensils (Sifrei Devarim 278:5; Bava Metzia 111b).

Verse 15

ואליו הוא נשא את נפשו means, for the sake of this hire he exposes his life even unto death: he climbs up a steep staircase or hangs on to a high tree to do his work (Sifrei Devarim 279:3; Bava Metzia 112a).
והיה בך חטא [LEST HE CALL AGAINST THEE UNTO THE LORD,] AND IT BE SIN UNTO THEE — under any circumstances, even if he does not call against thee to the Lord, but greater haste is made to punish thee because of him who cries (Sifrei Devarim 279:4; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 15:9).

Verse 16

לא יומתו אבות על בנים FATHERS SHALL NOT BE PUT TO DEATH על בנים — i.e. by the evidence of their children. But if you say it means "for the sin of their children", then it would be redundant for it goes on to state "every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (Sifrei Devarim 280:1; Sanhedrin 27b).
איש בחטאו יומתו EVERY MAN SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH FOR HIS OWN SIN — This suggests: but one who is not yet an איש, a man, does sometimes die on account of his father's sins: little children sometimes die at the hands of Heaven because of their parents' sins (Sifrei Devarim 280:3).

Verse 17

לא תטה משפט גר יתום THOU SHALT NOT PERVERT THE JUDGMENT OF THE STRANGER, OR OF THE FATHERLESS — and with regard to the well-to-do one has already been forbidden to do so (Deuteronomy 16:19): "Thou shalt not pervert judgment", (which is a general prohibition including both poor and rich), but it (Scripture) repeats it regarding the poor in order to make one who perverts the judgment of the poor transgress two negative commands. Because it is easier to pervert the judgment of the defenseless poor than that of the rich, therefore Scripture lays down a prohibition regarding him a second time (Sifrei Devarim 281:1).
ולא תחבל NOR TAKE [A WIDOW'S GARMENT] TO PLEDGE — The term חבל refers to taking a pledge not at the time when the loan is transacted (but when default is made in payment) (cf. Bava Metzia 115a; see also Rashi on Exodus 22:25).

Verse 18

וזכרת BUT THOU SHALT REMEMBER [THAT THOU WAST A SERVANT IN EGYPT AND THE LORD THY GOD RELEASED THEE THENCE] — I released you only with this condition — that you should observe my statutes even though there be monetary loss in the matter.

Verse 19

ושכחת עמר [WHEN THOU REAPEST THY HARVEST IN THY FIELD] AND HAST FORGOT A SHEAF … [THOU SHALT NOT RETURN TO TAKE IT] — a sheaf, but not a stack of corn (Sifrei Devarim 283:1). Hence they (the Rabbis) said, "A sheaf that contains two Seahs of grain which one has forgotten in the field, does not come under the term of שכחה (a forgotten sheaf)" (Mishnah Peah 6:6).
בשדה [AND HAST FORGOT …] IN THE FIELD — This apparently redundant word (it has just stated בשדך) is intended to include under this law forgotten "standing corn" (קמה) — that one has forgotten to cut down part of it (Sifrei Devarim 283:2).
לא תשוב לקחתו THOU SHALT NOT GO BACK TO TAKE IT — Hence they (the Rabbis) said: A sheaf that is behind him is considered as שכחה, that which is in front of him is not considered שכחה, for the expression "thou shalt not go back [to take it]" is not applicable to it (Mishnah Peah 6:4; Bava Metzia 11a).
למען יברכך THAT [THE LORD THY GOD] BLESS THEE — although it came into his (the stranger's or the orphan's) hand without him (the owner) intending this; it follows logically that he will certainly receive a blessing if he does this intentionally! — You must therefore admit that if a Sela fell out of one's hand and a poor man found it and supports himself by it, then he will surely be blessed on that account (Sifrei Devarim 283:6; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 5:17 end).

Verse 20

לא תפאר — This means: thou shalt not entirely remove its (the olive tree's) glory (תפארת) from it, i.e., its fruit (Chullin 131b). Hence they (the Rabbis) derived the law that one must leave פאה (some quantity of fruit) also on fruit-trees for the poor (cf. Mishnah Peah 4:1).
אחריך BEHIND THEE — This implies שכחה (forgotten fruit; that if he forgets to remove some fruit from the orchard, he must leave it for the poor).

Verse 21

לא תעולל [WHEN THOU GATHEREST THE GRAPES OF THY VINEYARD] THOU SHALT NOT GLEAN IT — i.e., if you find tender grapes in it, thou shalt not take them away. And what are עוללות? Clusters which have neither כתף, "arms" nor נטף "drippings" If, however, they have one of these, then it belongs to the owner of the vineyard (not to the poor) (Mishnah Peah 7:4). (Cf. Rashi on Leviticus 19:10 and our translation and Note thereon). — I have seen the following in the Talmud Yerushalmi Peah 7:4: What is כתף? Where the branches lie one upon the other: whilst נטף are those which hang down directly from the central stem.

Chapter 25

Verse 1

כי יהיה ריב IF THERE BE A QUARREL [BETWEEN MEN] they will in the end have to approach the judges (because of a bodily injury inflicted by one on the other, since Scripture goes on to state, "and if the wicked man be worthy of lashes", a punishment that can only follow, in the case of a quarrel, upon one of the parties receiving a blow). You must thus come to the conclusion that nothing good can come out of a quarrel. Just think: what was it that caused Lot to leave the righteous man (Abraham)? You must admit it was a mere quarrel (cf. Genesis 13:7—11; Sifrei Devarim 286:1).
והרשיעו את הרשע THEY SHALL CONDEMN THE WICKED — One might think that all who are found guilty in a law-suit are punished with lashes; Scripture, however, goes on to state, והיה אם בן הכות הרשע AND IT SHALL BE, IF THE WICKED MAN BE WORTHY TO BE BEATEN, [… THAT THE JUDGE SHALL SMITE HIM] — "if": you learn, therefore, that sometimes he receives lashes and sometimes he does not receive lashes. Who it is that may be punished with lashes can be learnt from the context: (v. 4) "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn" — which is לאו שלא נתק לעשה a prohibition which is not attached to a positive command (cf. Sifrei Devarim 286:4; Makkot 13b).

Verse 2

והפילו השפט AND THE JUDGE SHALL CAUSE HIM TO FALL DOWN — This teaches that one is not lashed whilst standing or sitting but only when bending (Makkot 22b).
לפניו כדי רשעתו [AND THE JUDGE SHALL … SMITE HIM] IN FRONT ACCORDING TO HIS WICKEDNESS (כדי רשעתו may mean "as much as is sufficient for his wickedness", i.e., for one part of his wickedness, רשעתו being singular) — in front (on his chest) corresponding to one part of his wickedness, and on his back corresponding to two parts: hence they (the Rabbis) derived that one must give him (anyone sentenced to lashes) two-thirds on his back and one third on his chest (Sifrei Devarim 286:6; Makkot 22b, 23a).
בְּמִסְפָּר BY A NUMBER — but it (the word) is not punctuated בַּמִּסְפָּר by the number; this shows that it is connected with the following word, to read בְּמַסֵּפַר ארבעים ["he shall smite him"] … by the number of forty, (i.e. by the number leading to forty), not, however, a full forty, but a number that leads up to the full total of forty, i.e., forty less one (Makkot 22a).

Verse 3

לא יסיף HE SHALL NOT EXCEED — From here is derived the prohibition referring to one who strikes his fellow man (Sanhedrin 86b; cf. Ketubot 33a).
ונקלה אחיך WHEN THY BROTHER SHOULD SEEM VILE [UNTO THEE] — All the time it has been calling him "wicked" (vv. 1 and 2), but as soon as he has received the lashes it calls him "thy brother"! (Sifrei Devarim 286:14).

Verse 4

לא תחסם שור THOU SHALT NOT MUZZLE THE OX [WHEN HE TREADETH OUT THE CORN] — Scripture is speaking of what usually occurs, but the same law applies to any cattle, non-domesticated beast and fowl that are doing some work that is connected with food. But if so why does it (Scripture) state "ox"? To exclude a human being from being subject to this law! (i.e. that if he restrains a workman from eating whilst engaged on some operation connected with food, the master is exempt from flagellation usually inflicted on one who transgresses a negative commandment) (Bava Metzia 88b).
בדישו WHEN HE TREADETH OUT THE CORN — One might think that one might muzzle it previous to that (lit., outside, i.e., before it starts working)! Scripture, however, states, "thou shalt not muzzle an ox" — which implies thou shalt not muzzle it under any circumstances (Bava Metzia 90b). Then why is threshing mentioned?. In order to tell you the following: What is threshing? Its characteristic is that it is done on a thing the work on which is not yet complete to make it liable to tithing and the giving of Challah, and which grows from the ground. So, too, this prohibition applies only to all operations which have similar characteristics: Thus there are excluded from the prohibition "not to muzzle" (i.e. you may restrain from eating) workmen who are engaged in milking, in cheese-making, or in pressing the moisture out of thick milk, all of which operations are done on things which do not grow from the ground; there are excluded, also, the workmen who are engaged in kneading, or in breaking the dough up into pieces for baking, for the work on it is then completed so that it becomes liable to Challah. There are also excluded the workmen engaged in separating dates and figs from the mass, for the work on them is then completed so that they become liable to tithing (Bava Metzia 89a).

Verse 5

כי ישבו אחים יחדו IF BRETHREN ABIDE TOGETHER, [AND ONE OF THEM DIE … THE WIFE OF THE DEAD SHALL NOT MARRY ABROAD] — This does not mean that they abide in one city but that they have one "abiding" in the world (that they were living at the same time) thus excluding from the operation of this law the wife of one's brother who never was in his "world" (i.e. a woman may not marry her brother-in-law who was born after her husband's death) (Sifrei Devarim 288:2; Yevamot 17b).
יחדו TOGETHER — means reciprocally associated (מיוחדים) in the law of inheritance (i.e. that they become the heirs of one another), thus excluding from the duty of יבום the brother on the mother's side (Sifrei Devarim 288:2).
ובן אין לו AND HE HAS NO SON — The last two words suggest עין עליו, investigate about him whether he has descendants of any kind — a son, or a daughter, or a son's son or a son's daughter, or a daughter's son or daughter's daughter (cf. Yevamot 22b).

Verse 6

והיה הבכור AND IT SHALL BE THE FIRSTBORN … — It is the eldest brother who is to perform the duty of levirate marriage (Sifrei Devarim 289:1; Yevamot 24a).
אשר תלד WHOM SHE WILL BEAR — This excludes from the operation of this law a sterile woman, since she cannot bear children (Sifrei Devarim 289:2).
יקום על שם אחיו HE SHALL SUCCEED IN THE NAME OF HIS BROTHER — he who has married his (the deceased brother's) wife shall receive the portion of the dead brother in his father's property (Sifrei Devarim 289:3).
ולא ימחה שמו THAT HIS NAME BE NOT WIPED OUT [OF ISRAEL] — thus excluding from the levirate marriage the wife of a castrate, whose name is anyhow wiped out (Sifrei Devarim 289:5; Yevamot 24a).

Verse 7

השערה — Translate this as the Targum does: to the gate of the court.

Verse 8

ועמד AND HE SHALL STAND [AND SAY] — He must say this standing (Sifrei Devarim 290:3).
יאמר AND HE SHALL SAY — in the Holy Language. She, too, has to make her statements in the Holy Language (Yevamot 106b; cf. Sifrei Devarim 291:6).

Verse 9

וירקה בפניו THEN SHE SHALL SPIT BEFORE HIS FACE — on the ground (not in his face) (Yevamot 106b).
אשר לא יבנה [SO SHALL IT BE DONE UNTO THAT MAN] THAT WILL NOT BUILD UP [HIS BROTHER'S HOUSE] — from here the Rabbis derived the law that one who has once given his deceased brothers wife חליצה shall not afterwards marry her, for it does not state "[Thus shall it be done to the man] who hath not built up his brother's house", but אשר לא יבנה: "[Thus shall be done to the man] that he shall never build up" — because he has not built up, he shall never after build it up (Yevamot 10b; cf. Sifrei Devarim 291:8).

Verse 10

תקרא שמו וגו׳ AND HIS NAME SHALL BE CALLED [IN ISRAEL "THE HOUSE OF HIM THAT HATH HIS SHOE LOOSED"] — It is a duty of all those standing there to exclaim: חלוץ הנעל "O, you who have had your shoe drawn off!" (Sifrei Devarim 291:10; Yevamot 106b).

Verse 11

כי ינצו אנשים WHEN MEN STRIVE TOGETHER, they will in the end come to blows, as it goes on to state "[and the wife approacheth to deliver her husband]" out of the hand of him who smiteth him: No good can come out of a quarrel (Sifrei Devarim 292:1; cf. Rashi on v. 1).

Verse 12

וקצת את כפה THEN THOU SHALT HEW OFF HER HAND — i.e., she must pay money that is the equivalent of the shame to which he has been put (Bava Kamma 28a), all according to the social position of the person who put him to shame and of him who was shamed (Bava Kamma 83b). But perhaps this is not the meaning, but that you should cut off her hand, literally?! It states, however, here לא תחוס, "thine eye shall not pity her" and it states there (Deuteronomy 19:21) in the laws concerning the plotting witnesses "thou shalt not pity them"; now, what is the case there? It is monetary

compensation (see Rashi on that passage)! So, too, monetary compensation is here intended (Sifrei Devarim 293:2).

Verse 13

אבן ואבן [THOU SHALT NOT HAVE IN THY BAG] DIVERSE STONES — i.e., weights. גדולה וקטנה A GREAT AND A SMALL — i.e. thou shalt not have a large one that contradicts the small one, — that one must not buy (lit., take) goods by the larger and sell (lit., give it back) by the smaller (Sifrei Devarim 294:1).

Verse 14

לא יהיה לך THOU SHALT NOT HAVE — This suggests: if YOU do so (if you have false weights), לא יהיה לך you will have nothing (you will become impoverished, being deprived of your property, as you have deprived others of theirs) (cf. Sifrei Devarim 294:3).

Verse 15

אבן שלמה וצדק יהיה לך THOU SHALT HAVE A PERFECT AND JUST WEIGHT — This again suggests: if you will do this, (using just weights and measures), you will have (יהיה לך) much (cf. Sifrei Devarim 294:3).

Verse 16

Verse 17

זכור את אשר עשה לך REMEMBER WHAT [AMALEK] DID UNTO THEE — If you use false weights and measures then you must apprehend the provocation of the enemy, as it states (Proverbs 11:1): "A false balance is an abomination to the Lord, etc.", and there is written immediately after this (v. 2): "If intentional sin comes, shame comes"(Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Teitzei 8).

Verse 18

אשר קרך בדרך HOW HE MET THEE BY THE WAY — The word קרך is connected in meaning with מקרה "a sudden happening", i.e., he came against thee by surprise. Another explanation is: it is connected in meaning with the term קרי, nocturnal pollution and uncleanness, because he polluted them by pederasty. Yet another explanation is that it is connected in meaning with the expression קור in the phrase קור וחום "cold and heat" and it means: he made you cold and lukewarm after the boiling heat you had before. For all the nations were afraid to war against you and this one came and began to point out the way to others. A parable! It may be compared to a boiling hot bath into which no living creature could descend. A good-for-nothing came, and sprang down into it; although he scalded himself he made it appear cold to others (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Teitzei 9).
ויזנב בך means, smiting the membrum; he cut off the membra and threw them up provocatively towards Heaven (God) (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Teitzei 10).
כל הנחשלים אחריך [AND HE SMOTE THE HINDMOST OF THEE] EVEN THOSE THAT WERE FEEBLE BEHIND THEE — i.e., those who were enfeebled because of their sins and whom the clouds had expelled from the protection they afforded (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Teitzei 10).
ואתה עיף ויגע AND THOU WAST FAINT AND WEARY — faint through thirst, for it is written, (Exodus 17:3) "And the people thirsted there for water" and it is written immediately afterwards (v. 8) "Then came Amalek".

ויגע AND WEARY — from the journey (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Teitzei 10).
ולא ירא AND HE FEARED NOT — Amalek feared not אלהים GOD so as to refrain from harming you (Sifrei Devarim 296:7).

Verse 19

תמחה את זכר עמלק THOU SHALT WIPE AWAY THE REMEMBRANCE OF AMALEK, — both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep (a quotation from I Samuel 15:3, stating how the Amalekites were to be destroyed), so that the name of Amalek should never again be mentioned even in connection with a beast, in that one could say: "This beast belonged to Amalek" (Pesikta Zutrata).

Chapter 26

Verse 1

והיה כי תבוא … וירשתה וישבת בה AND IT SHALL BE, WHEN YOU COME IN [UNTO THE LAND …] AND POSSESS IT AND SETTLE THEREIN — This tells us that they (the Israelites) were not under the obligation to bring first fruits until they had conquered the land and divided it (cf. Kiddushin 37b).

Verse 2

מראשית [THEN THOU SHALT TAKE] OF THE FIRST [OF ALL THE FRUIT OF THE GROUND] — of the first fruits, but not all the first fruits, for not all fruits are subject to the duty of bringing to the Temple their first-fruits, only the seven chief kinds of products of Israel alone, for there is mentioned here ארץ, "the land" (אשר תביא מארצך) and it states there (Deuteronomy 8:8) "a land (ארץ) of wheat, and barley, etc.", (thus suggesting an analogy — that the fruits of the land referred to here are those enumerated there). What is it that Scripture is speaking of there? Of the seven products through which the land of Israel is distinguished! So, too, here it speaks only of the distinguished products of the land of Israel which are seven species only (Sifrei Devarim 297:4; Menachot 84b).
זית שמן mentioned as one of these distinguished products is the Agari olive, in which the oil is gathered in one place.
ודבש HONEY is honey of dates (not of bees).
מראשית OF ITS FIRST FRUITS — but not all the first fruits (not even of the seven species mentioned above) but when a man goes into his field and sees for the first time that year a fig that has ripened he binds a piece of straw round it as an indication and says "Lo, this is בכורים" (and it suffices) (Sifrei Devarim 297:7; Mishnah Bikkurim 3:1).

Verse 3

אשר יהיה בימים ההם [AND THOU SHALT GO UNTO THE PRIEST] THAT SHALL BE IN THOSE DAYS — These apparently redundant words suggest: you have none else than the priest who lives in your days (you are only concerned with him) (cf. Sifrei Devarim 298:3; Rosh Hashanah 25b; see also Rashi on Deuteronomy 17:9).
ואמרת אליו AND SAY UNTO HIM that you are not ungrateful (Sifrei Devarim 299:1).
הגדתי היום I PROFESS THIS DAY — [the expression "this day" implies that the declaration is made] one once a year, but not twice a year [even when bringing from a different fruit or crop] (Sifrei Devarim 299:2).

Verse 4

ולקח הכהן המנה מידך AND THE PRIEST SHALL TAKE THE BASKET OUT OF THY HAND in order to wave it. The priest places his hand beneath the hands of the owner and so waves it (Sukkah 47b).

Verse 5

וענית is an expression for raising one's voice (speaking loudly) (Sotah 32b).
ארמי אבד אבי A SYRIAN DESTROYED MY FATHER — He mentions the loving kindness of the Omnipresent saying, ארמי אבד אבי, a Syrian destroyed my father, which means: "Laban wished to exterminate the whole nation" (cf. the Haggadah for Passover) when he pursued Jacob. Because he intended to do it the Omnipresent accounted it unto him as though he had actually done it (and therefore the expression אבד which refers to the past is used), for as far as the nations of the world are concerned the Holy One, blessed be He, accounts unto them intention as an actual deed (cf. Sifrei Devarim 301:3; Onkelos).
וירד מצרימה AND HE WENT DOWN INTO EGYPT — But there were others, too, "who came against us to destroy us" (cf. the Passover Haggadah), for afterwards Jacob went down into Egypt with his children and these were enslaved there).
במתי מעט WITH A FEW PERSONS — with only seventy souls (Sifrei Devarim 301:4; Onkelos).

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

אל המקום הזה [AND HE HATH BROUGHT US] UNTO THIS PLACE — This refers to the Temple where the worshipper was standing when he made this declaration.
ויתן לנו את הארץ means what it literally implies: AND HATH GIVEN US THE LAND.

Verse 10

והנחתו AND THOU SHALT PLACE IT [BEFORE THE LORD THY GOD] — This tells us that he takes it after the priest has waved it, and holds it in his hand whilst he makes the declaration, and then again waves it (Sukkah 47b; cf. Sifrei Devarim 301:33).

Verse 11

ושמחת בכל הטוב AND THOU SHALT REJOICE IN EVERY GOOD THING — From this they (the Rabbis) derived the law that the recital on the occasion of bringing the first fruits is made only during the joyful period of the year — from Pentecost till the Feast of Tabernacles — when a man is gathering in his grain, his fruits, his wine and his oil; but from

Tabernacles onwards until Chanucah if he brings these, he does not make the recital (Pesachim 36b).
אתה והלוי THOU AND THE LEVITE — the Levites are also bound to bring the first fruits to the priest if they planted anything in the fields attached to their cities.
והגר אשר בקרבך AND THE STRANGER THAT IS AMONG YOU — he, too, brings the first fruits to the priest but does not make the recital, for he cannot truly say, as is prescribed, "[I profess this day … that I have come into the land which the Lord sware] unto our fathers" (v. 3) since his fathers were not Israelites (cf. Sifrei Devarim 301:37; Mishnah Bikkurim 1:4; Talmud Yerushalmi Maaser Sheni 5:5).

Verse 12

כי תכלה לעשר את כל מעשר תבואתך בשנה השלישת WHEN THOU HAST FINISHED TITHING ALL THE TITHES OF THY INCREASE IN THE THIRD YEAR — this means: when you have finished the setting apart of the tithes of the third year. It (Scripture) has fixed the time for removing the tithes from the house (ביעור) and the confession regarding their proper disposition (ודוי) for the eve of the Passover festival of the fourth year, because it is stated, (Deuteronomy 14:28) "At the end (מקצה) of three years thou shall bring forth [all the tithe of thy increase in the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates]". It uses here (in the verse just quoted) the words "at the end of" (מקצה) and it states further (Deuteronomy 31:10—11): "At the end of every seven years … [in the festival of Tabernacles, … thou shalt read this law before Israel]" with reference to the law of "public assembly", in order to suggest an analogy. How is it in the case further on? It takes place at a festival period as stated! So, too, here, the rite takes place at a festival period. If so, one might argue: What is the case there? It takes place on the festival of Tabernacles; so, too, here the rite takes place on Tabernacles! Scripture, however, states here: When thou hast finished tithing the tithes of the third year, which thus points to a festival on which all tithes are finished and this is the Passover festival, for there are many trees the fruits of which are gathered after Tabernacles, and consequently the setting apart of tithes of the third year is at an end on Passover of the fourth year. And whoever had delayed his tithes until then Scripture declares him bound to clear them out by that time from his house (cf. Sifrei Devarim 302; Talmud Yerushalmi Maaser Sheni 5:6).
שנת המעשר [THE THIRD YEAR] WHICH IS THE YEAR OF TITHE — These apparently redundant words (for every year except the Sabbatical year it "a year of tithing") suggest: that year in which only one of the two tithes that had to be separated in the previous two years is due (שנת המעשר, lit., the year of the tithe), viz., the "First Tithe". For in the first year of the Shemitta-period the law of the "First Tithe" applies — as it is stated, (Numbers 28:26) "[And to the Levites shalt thou speak …] when ye take of the children of Israel the tithe" (which is the First Tithe) — and that of the "Second Tithe", as it is stated, (Deuteronomy 14:22—23; cf. Rashi on the latter verse) "[Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed … year by year], and thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God … the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil". You thus have two tithes every year, one that you must give the Levite and the other which you must consume yourself in Jerusalem (the "Second Tithe"). It now comes and teaches you here that, in the third year, of those two tithes mentioned only one is due, and which is it? It is the "First Tithe". And that instead of the "Second Tithe" one has to give in the third year (and similarly in the sixth) the "Tithe of the Poor", for it states here ונתת ללוי "AND THOU HAST GIVEN UNTO THE LEVITE", i.e. given him that which is due to him — here you have mention of the "First Tithe", לגר ליתום ולאלמנה "[AND THOU HAST GIVEN] … UNTO THE STRANGER, THE FATHERLESS, AND

THE WIDOW" — this is the "Tithe of the Poor" (cf. Sifrei Devarim 303:1; see also Rashi on Deuteronomy 14:23 and 29).
ואכלו בשעריך ושבעו THAT THEY MAY EAT WITHIN THY GATES, AND BE SATISFIED — Give them sufficient to satisfy them. From here they (the Rabbis) derived the law: one must give the poor in the barn no less than half a kab of wheat or a kab of barley (Sifrei Devarim 303:2; Talmud Yerushalmi Peah 8:5; see also Rashi on Deuteronomy 14:29).

Verse 13

ואמרת לפני ה' אלהיך THEN THOU SHALT SAY BEFORE THE LORD THY GOD — Make the declaration (lit., confess) that you have given your tithes (Sifrei Devarim 303:5).
בערתי הקדש מן הבית I HAVE REMOVED THE HALLOWED THINGS FROM THE HOUSE — this refers to the "Second Tithe" which is termed קדש (cf. Leviticus 27:30 and Rashi thereon) and the "fruit of the vineyard in the fourth year of its growth" (נטע רבעי which is also termed קדש; cf. Leviticus 19:24) (Sifrei Devarim 303:6; Mishnah Maaser Sheni 5:10). Scripture teaches you that if he has delayed his "Second Tithes" of the first two years of the Shemitta period and has not taken them up to Jerusalem he must bring them up now (Mishnah Maaser Sheni 5:10).
וגם נתתיו ללוי AND I HAVE ALSO GIVEN THEM TO THE LEVITE — this refers to the "First Tithe". וגם AND ALSO — the redundant word וגם serves also to include "Terumah" and the first-fruits that one has failed to give to the priests (Sifrei Devarim 303:7; Mishnah Maaser Sheni 5:10).
ולגר ליתום ולאלמנה AND [I ALSO HAVE GIVEN] … UNTO THE STRANGER, THE FATHERLESS, AND THE WIDOW — this refers to the "Tithe of the Poor" (Sifrei Devarim 303:8).
ככל מצותך ACCORDING TO ALL THY COMMANDMENTS — i.e. I have given them (all the sacred gifts mentioned) in the sequence prescribed for them: I have not set aside the heave-offering before the first-fruits, nor the tithe before the heave-offering, nor the "second" tithe before the "first". This would indeed have meant altering the sequence, for the heave-offering is (after the first-fruits which are naturally the first of all sacred gifts) termed ראשית "firstling" (in its relation to the tithes) because it is the first gift due after it (the crop) has become (bears the name of) corn (i.e. after it has been winnowed), and it states, (Exodus 22:28) "Thou shalt not delay to offer from thy fulness and thy liquids", which means (see Rashi on that verse and Note thereon): Thou shalt not alter the prescribed order (cf. Sifrei Devarim 303:11; Mishnah Maaser Sheni 5:11).
לא עברתי ממצותיך I HAVE NOT TRANSGRESSED THY COMMANDMENTS — i.e. I have not set apart as a sacred gift grain from one species as a substitute for what was due from another species, nor have I separated grain from the new crop as a substitute for what was due from the old one (Sifrei Devarim 303:13; cf. Mishnah Maaser Sheni 5:11).
ולא שכחתי NOR HAVE I FORGOTTEN — i.e. forgotten to bless you on the occasion of setting the tithes apart (Sifrei Devarim 303:14; Mishnah Maaser Sheni 5:11; cf. Berachot 40b).

Verse 14

לא אכלתי באני ממנו I HAVE NOT EATEN THEREOF IN MY MOURNING — From here we may derive that it (partaking of sacred gifts) is forbidden to an אונן (a technical term for the near relatives of a deceased, from the period of death to burial) (cf. Sifrei Devarim 303:15; Mishnah Bikkurim 2:2).
ולא בערתי ממנו בטמא NEITHER HAVE I CONSUMED ANY THEREOF UNCLEAN — i.e. whether I was unclean and it (the sacred gift) was clean, or I was clean and it unclean (Sifrei Devarim 303:16). But where has one been prohibited about this (that he declares that he has not infringed the command)? In

the following passage: (Deuteronomy 12:17) “Thou mayest not eat within thy gates [the tithe of thy corn]” — this (the expression “within thy gates”) refers to eating sacred things in a state of uncleanness, just as is stated with reference to פסולי המקדשין (animals intended as sacrifices, but which have become unfit for that purpose) (Deuteronomy 15:22) “Thou mayest eat it within thy gates: the unclean and the clean person [may eat it alike]”. These you may eat, states Scripture, — but this (the tithes of thy corn in a state of uncleanness) you must not eat in the manner which is termed “eating within thy gates” (“the unclean and the clean together”) of which there is mention in another passage (Yevamot 73b).
ולא נתתי ממנו למת NOR HAVE I GIVEN THEREOF FOR THE CORPSE to prepare for it a coffin and shrouds (Mishnah Maaser Sheni 5:12).
שמעתי בקול ה' אלהי I HAVE HEARKENED TO THE VOICE OF THE LORD MY GOD — i.e. I have brought it into the Chosen House (Temple) (Mishnah Maaser Sheni 5:12).
עשיתי ככל אשר צויתני I HAVE DONE ACCORDING TO ALL THOU HAST COMMANDED ME — I have myself rejoiced and made others rejoice by it (Sifrei Devarim 303:18; Mishnah Maaser Sheni 5:12).

Verse 15

השקיפה ממעון קדשך GLANCE DOWN FROM THE RESIDENCE OF THY HOLINESS. . [AND BLESS THY PEOPLE ISRAEL — “We have done what Thou hast laid upon us, do Thou now what has upon Thee to do, because Thou hast said, (Leviticus 25:3, 4) If ye walk in My ordinances … Then I will give you rain in its season etc.
אשר נתתה לנו כאשר נשבעת לאבתינו [BLESS THY PEOPLE ISRAEL, AND THE LAND,] WHICH THOU HAST GIVEN US, AS THOU SWAREST UNTO OUR FATHERS, to give it unto us, and indeed Thou hast kept Thy promise, giving us ארץ זבת חלב ודבש A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY.

Verse 16

היום הזה ה׳ אלהיך מצוך THIS DAY THE LORD THY GOD COMMANDETH THEE — This suggests: each day they (God’s commandments) should be to you as something new (not antiquated and something of which you have become tired), as though you had received the commands that very day for the first time (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tavo 1; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 11:13).
ושמרת ועשית אותם THOU SHALT THEREFORE KEEP AND DO THEM — A heavenly voice (בת קול) pronounces by these words a blessing upon him (the worshipper): “You have brought the first fruits today — you will be privileged to do so next year, too!” (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tavo 1).

Verse 17

האמרה, האמירך are words for the meaning of which there is no decisive proof in Scripture. It seems to me, however, that they are expressions denoting “separation” and “selection”: “You have singled Him out from all strange gods to be unto you as God — and He on His part, has singled you out from the nations on earth to be unto Him a select people”. [As far as this meaning is concerned I have found a parallel (lit., a witness) to it where it bears the meaning “glory”, as in (Psalms 94:4): “All wrongdoers glory in themselves”].

Verse 18

כאשר דבר לך AS HE HATH PROMISED THEE — in the words (Exodus 19:5) “Ye shall be a select portion unto Me” (Mekhilta).

Verse 19

ולהיותך עם קדש … כאשר דבר AND THAT THOU MAYEST BE AN HOLY PEOPLE … AS HE HATH SPOKEN — in the words, (Leviticus 20:26) "And ye shall be holy unto Me" (Mekhilta).

Chapter 27

Verse 1

שמר את כל המצוה — The word שמור is a frequentative present tense, gardant in old French, keeping in English

Verse 2

והקמת לך THEN THOU SHALT RAISE THEE UP [GREAT STONES] — in the Jordan, and afterwards you shall take out from there others and build an altar of them on Mount Eval. Consequently you must say that there were three sets of stones: twelve in the Jordan, an equal number in Gilgal, and another twelve on Mount Ebal, as is stated in Treatise Sotah 35b.

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

באר היטב EXPLAINING THEM WELL — i.e. in seventy languages (Sotah 32a; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 1:5).

Verse 9

הסכת — Understand this as the Targum does: אצית listen!
היום הזה נהיית לעם THIS DAY YOU HAVE BECOME THE PEOPLE [OF THE LORD YOUR GOD] — On each day it should appear to you as though it were "today" that you have entered the covenant with him (Berachot 63b).

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

לברך את העם [THESE SHALL STAND UP …] TO BLESS THE PEOPLE — The procedure was as is found in Treatise Sotah 32a: Six tribes ascended the top of Mount Gerizim and the other six the top of Mount Ebal, the priests, the Levites and the Ark remaining below in the midst (i.e. in the valley between). The Levites turned their faces towards Mount Gerizim and began to recite the blessing: "Blessed be the man that does not make any graven or molten image etc.", and both these and those (the tribes on Mount Gerizim and those on Mount Ebal) answered "Amen"! Then they turned their faces towards Mount Ebal and began to recite the curse, saying: "Cursed be the man who maketh any graven [or molten image]" — and so in the case of all of them (the curses set forth here) till the last: "Cursed be he that does not uphold [all the words of this law to do them]" (cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 11:29).

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

מקלה means, "making light of", it has the same meaning as (Deuteronomy 25:3) "Lest … thy brother become despicable (נקלה).

Verse 17

מסיג גבול [CURSED BE] HE THAT REMOVES [HIS NEIGHBOUR'S] LAND-MARK — i.e. puts it further back in his neighbor's field and thereby steals ground from him. The word מסיג has the same meaning as the verb in (Isaiah 59:14) "and he is turned backwards (הֻסַּג)".

Verse 18

משגה עור [CURSED BE] HE THAT CAUSES THE BLIND TO GO ASTRAY — This means: one who is blind (inexperienced) in a matter and one gives him bad advice (cf. Rashi on Leviticus 19:14).

Verse 19

Verse 20

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

מכה רעהו בסתר [CURSED BE] HE THAT SMITETH HIS FELLOW SECRETLY — It is of slander that it here speaks (slander may be termed "smiting in secret") (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 53). — I have seen in the Work of R. Moses the Preacher; There are here eleven verses beginning with the words "cursed be" corresponding to eleven tribes. In allusion to Simeon, however, he (Moses) did not write down a formula beginning with "cursed be", because he had no intention to bless him before his death when he blessed the other tribes (the tribe of Simeon is the only one not mentioned in chapter XXXIII. which contains the blessings that Moses bestowed on the tribes), therefore he did not want to curse him either.

Verse 25

Verse 26

אשר לא יקים [CURSED BE] HE THAT DOES NOT UPHOLD [ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LAW TO DO] — Here (in these words) he included the entire Torah under a curse and they took it upon them pledging themselves by an execration and an oath.

Chapter 28

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

Verse 4

שגר אלפיך means the young of thy cattle which the animal casts out (שגר) of its womb.
ועשתרות צאנך — Understand this as the Targum does: the flocks of thy herd. Our Rabbis asked, "Why are they (the flocks of sheep) called עשתרות? Because, replied they, they enrich (מעשירות) their owners (through the sale of their wool, etc.) and make them strong as עשתרות — which are strong rocks (Chullin 84b; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 7:13).

Verse 5

ברוך טנאך BLESSED SHALL BE THY BASKET — i.e. thy fruits (which are kept in baskets). — Another explanation of טנאך is that it means liquids which you filter through baskets (wicker work).
ומשארתך accordingly means dry produce that remains (נשאר) in the vessel and does not flow out.

Verse 6

ברוך אתה בבאך וברוך אתה בצאתך BLESSED SHALT THOU BE WHEN THOU COMEST IN, AND BLESSED SHALT THOU BE WHEN THOU GOEST OUT — This means: may thy departure from this world be as sinless as was thy coming into the world (Bava Metzia 107a).

Verse 7

ובשבעה דרכים ינוסו לפניך AND THEY SHALL RUN AWAY BEFORE THEE SEVEN WAYS — Such is the manner of all who flee out of fear: they scatter in every direction.

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

Verse 12

Verse 13

Verse 14

Verse 15

Verse 16

Verse 17

Verse 18

Verse 19

Verse 20

המארה means PAUCITY, similar to (Leviticus 13:51) "a fretting leprosy (ממארה)" (a leprosy that frets the flesh, thus attenuating it).
והמהומה — Onkelos renders this by שגוש which means: A TERRIFYING SOUND.

Verse 21

Verse 22

בשחפת — This is a disease whereby one's flesh becomes worn away and swollen.
ובקדחת AND WITH FEVER — The word is similar in meaning to the verb in (Deuteronomy 32:22) "For a fire burns (קדחה) in My nostrils". It is the heat felt by sick people, mal du feu in old French, which is a very high temperature.
ובדלקת — This is a fever even hotter than קדחת. — All these terms denote different kinds of diseases, but of a similar character.
ובחרחר — a disease that makes one burning hot inside the body, so that one is continually thirsting for water; in old French astrandement. The word is of the same meaning as the verbs in (Job 30:30) "My bones are burnt (חרה) because of heat", and in (Jeremiah 6:29) "The bellows are burnt (נחר) by the fire".
ובחרב AND WITH THE SWORD — i.e. He will bring hostile troops against you.
ובשדפון וביקרון AND WITH BLASTING AND WITH MILDEW — these are diseases that afflict grain which is yet in the field (yet growing).
שדפון is the hot east-wind, hale in old French
ירקון is drought. The symptoms are that the surface of the grain becomes pale and ultimately turns yellow; chaume in old French
עד אבדך — The Targum renders this by עד דתיבד, meaning "until you perish", i.e. until you will perish on your own.

Verse 23

והיו שמיך אשר על ראשך נחשת AND THY HEAVEN WHICH IS OVER THY HEAD SHALL BE COPPER — These curses (i.e. all the curses contained in this chapter) Moses expressed them as though they came from his own mouth (Megillah 31b) whilst those he spoke on Mount Sinai (Leviticus 26), he expressed them as though from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, as indeed is implied by them (by the expressions used), for so it states there: "And if ye will not hearken unto Me"; "And if ye walk contrary to Me", whilst here it says: "[And if thou wilt not obey] the voice of the Lord thy God"; "The Lord shall make cleave unto thee"; "The Lord shall smite thee". Moses was milder in his curses, expressing them in the singular ("The Lord shall smite thee", not "you", the entire people), and similarly in this curse, too, he was milder, for in the former curses (those in Leviticus) it states, (Leviticus 26:19) "[I will make] your heaven as iron and your earth as copper", i.e., that the heaven would not exude moisture, just as iron does not exude, and there would therefore be drought in the world, whilst the earth would exude moisture (be humid)

just as copper sweats, and it would consequently rot the fruits. Here, however, it states, "Thy heaven shall be copper and thy earth shall be iron", i.e. that the heavens would exude moisture: even though they might not pour with rain, at any rate there would be no ruinous drought in the world; whilst the earth would not exude moisture just as iron does not sweat, and consequently the fruits would not perish. Nevertheless this is a curse: for whether it (the earth) be as copper or whether it be as iron it will produce no fruit, and the heaven, too, will not pour with rain (give rain in abundance) (cf. Sifra, Bechukotai, Chapter 5 3 on Leviticus 26:19).

Verse 24

מטר ארצך אבק ועפר [GOD SHALL MAKE] THE RAIN OF THY LAND POWDER AND DUST, through "a wind that comes after the rain" as the Talmud says (Taanit 3b); rain will fall but not as much as is needed, so that there will not be sufficient of it to lay the dust; the wind will come and blow the dust about and cover the leaves of the vegetation which are still wet from the water and it will adhere to them and so become mud which will afterwards become dry, and they will rot (Taanit 3b).

Verse 25

לזעוה [AND THOU SHALT] BECOME A זעוה, i.e. a cause of fright and trembling: it means that all who will hear of thy afflictions will tremblingly move away from you and will say, "Woe upon us, would that there should not befall us as has befallen them!"

Verse 26

Verse 27

בשחין מצרים [THE LORD WILL SMITH THEE] WITH THE BOILS OF EGYPT — This was very bad, being wet inside and dry on the surface, as is stated in Treatise Bechorot 41a.
גרב is a wet boil,
חרס is a boil dry as a potsherd (חרס identical with חרש, a potsherd cf. Rashi on Leviticus 21:20).

Verse 28

ובתמהון לבב means "clogging of the heart"; etourdison in old French

Verse 29

עשוק [THOU SHALT BE] WRONGED — i.e. against every action of yours there will be dispute.

Verse 30

ישגלנה is connected in meaning with the noun שגל, a concubine; Scripture, however, paraphrases it by using a more decent, expression, viz., ישכבנה (i.e. the קרי is ישכבנה). This is a variation such as writers make to avoid an indecent expression (Megillah 25b; cf. Rashi on Genesis 18:22 and Note p. 266).
תחללנו THOU SHALT NOT MAKE IT חולין in the fourth year so as to be able to eat its fruits (cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 20:6).

Verse 31

Verse 32

וכלות אליהם [AND THINE EYES SHALL SEE] AND LONG FOR THEM — i.e. they will look expectantly for them (the children) that they should return home, but they will not return. — Any desire that does not come to fulfillment is termed a "failing of the eyes" (cf. Deuteronomy 28:65).

Verse 33

Verse 34

Verse 35

Verse 36

Verse 37

לשמה [THOU SHALT] BECOME AN OBJECT OF ASTONISHMENT — This word means the same as תמהון, etourdison in old French, English astonishment. — Whoever will see you will be astonished about you.
למשל [THOU SHALT] BECOME A PROVERB — i.e., when an extraordinary misfortune comes upon a man people will say: "This is like the misfortune that befell Mr. So-and-so!"
ולשנינה AND A BYWORD — This is an expression of the same meaning as (Deuteronomy 6:7) ושננתם, "And thou shalt speak often". — "And thou shalt become a שנינה" therefore means: they (people) will talk about you (make you the topic of their conversation). Onkelos, too, renders it thus: ולשועי, which has the meaning of "relating about a matter", just as ואשתעי is the Targum rendering of ויספר, "and he related".

Verse 38

יחסלנו [THE LOCUST] WILL CROP IT OFF — The word means: it will make an end of it. It is for this reason that it (the locust) is also called חסיל (cf. e.g. Joel 1:4) because it consumes all the vegetation, etc. (חסל in Aramaic means "to end"; cf. Talmud Yerushalmi Taanit 3:6).

Verse 39

Verse 40

ישל means, it (the olivetree) shall drop its fruits. It is similar in meaning to the verb in (Deuteronomy 19:5), "And the iron falleth off (ונשל).

Verse 41

Verse 42

יירש הצלצל means, the locust will make it (the tree) bare (lit., will impoverish it) of its fruits.
יירש means, it will impoverish.
צלצל is a species of locust. — One cannot explain יִירַשׁ as meaning "inheriting" ("taking possesion of", as the Targum does), for if so it ought to have written יִירַשׁ (cf. Genesis 21:10). Nor can it have the meaning of “driving out” and “expelling”, for then it ought to have written יורישׁ.

Verse 43

Verse 44

Verse 45

Verse 46

Verse 47

מרב כל means: while you possessed all good things.

Verse 48

Verse 49

כאשר ידאה הנשר [THE LORD WILL BRING A NATION AGAINST YOU FROM AFAR], AS THE EAGLE SWOOPS DOWN — i.e. suddenly, and by a successful march, and its horses will be swift.
לא תשמע לשנו means, a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand. Similar is, (Genesis 41:15) “You understand (תשמע) a dream to interpret it”, and so, too, (Genesis 42:23) “that Joseph understood (שמע)”; entendre in old French

Verse 50

Verse 51

Verse 52

עד רדת חמתיך — The word רדת means subjugation (רדוי) and conquest (cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 20:20).

Verse 53

במצור … בשר בניך … ואכלת AND THOU SHALT EAT … THE FLESH OF THY SONS … IN THE SIEGE, [AND IN THE DISTRESS] — Because they (the enemies) will besiege the city and there will consequently be distress— i.e. the stress of famine.

Verse 54

הרך בך והענג THE MOST TENDER AMONG YOU AND THE DELICATE — רך and ענג are one and the same person; the words denote delicate living. The expressions in v. 56 ומהתענג ומרך prove regarding them that both of them (the two descriptive terms) refer to one person. The meaning of the verse is: Although he may be fastidious and his nature sickens at anything nauseous, yet the flesh of his sons and daughters will be so pleasant to him on account of his hunger, that תרע עינו HIS EYE WILL BE EVIL towards his remaining children, מתת לאחד מהם מבשר בניו THAT HE WILL NOT GIVE TO ANY OF THEM THE FLESH OF HIS CHILDREN — their brothers, אשר יאכל WHOM HE WILL EAT. — Another explanation of הרך בך is: the merciful and tender-hearted will become cruel because of the great hunger and will not give of the flesh of their children who have been killed to their remaining children.

Verse 55

Verse 56

תרע עינה באיש חיקה ובבנה ובבתה HER EYE SHALL BE EVIL TOWARDS THE HUSBAND OF HER BOSOM, AND TOWARDS HER SON, AND TOWARDS HER DAUGHTER — i.e. the adult sons and daughters,

Verse 57

ובשליתה AND TOWARDS HER שליה — i.e. towards her little children; towards all these will her eye be evil when she eats one of them so that she will not give of the flesh to those that are still with her (to those that are still living).

Verse 58

Verse 59

והפלא ה' את מכתך THEN THE LORD WILL DISTINGUISH THY PLAGUES — He will afflict you with plagues exceptional and quite different from other plagues.
ונאמנות (lit., trustworthy, reliable), i.e. certain to chastise you — certain to perform the task entrusted to them.

Verse 60

אשר יגרת מפניהם [HE WILL BRING UPON THEE ALL THE DISEASES OF EGYPT] OF WHICH THOU ART AFRAID — i.e. afraid of the plagues (not of Egypt). When the Israelites saw the strange plagues that came upon the Egyptians they were afraid of them — that they might not befall them also. You may know this, for so it states, (Exodus 15:26) "If thou wilt indeed hearken [to

the voice of the Lord …], none of the diseases which I have put upon Egypt, will I put on you", since one threatens a person only with things of which he is afraid.

Verse 61

יעלם is a form from the root עלה (not from עלם).

Verse 62

ונשארתם במתי מעט תחת וגו׳ AND YOU SHALL REMAIN FEW IN NUMBER WHEREAS [YOU WERE ONCE AS NUMEROUS AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN] — i.e. a few instead of many.

Verse 63

כן ישיש ה' עליכם SO WILL THE LORD MAKE your enemies REJOICE OVER YOU, להאביד וגו׳ TO DESTROY [YOU] (Megillah 10b).
ונסחתם is an expression denoting "uprooting". Similar is, (Proverbs 15:25) "The Lord will uproot (יסח) the house of the haughty".

Verse 64

ועבדתם שם אלהים אחרים AND YE WILL SERVE THERE OTHER GODS — Understand this as the Targum does: (ye will serve the peoples that worship idols); not actually that they shall serve idols, but they will have to pay tribute and poll-taxes to the priests of the idols.

Verse 65

לא תרגיע means, THOU SHALT FIND NO REST, as (Isaiah 28:12) "This is the rest (המרגעה)
לב רגז means, A TREMBLING HEART, as the Targum has it: דחל, fearing. It is similar in meaning to (Isaiah 14:9) "The nether-world from beneath trembleth (רגזה) for thee"; (Exodus 15:14) "The peoples have heard, they trembled"; (II Samuel 22:8) "The foundations of heaven trembled".
וכליון עינים AND A FAILING OF THE EYES — The phrase is used of one who expectantly looks for help and it does not come (cf. v. 32).

Verse 66

חייך תלאים לך THY LIFE SHALL HANG BEFORE THEE — because of uncertainty. — Anything that is uncertain may be termed תלוי ("hanging"); You will always be saying: "Perhaps I shall die to-day through the sword that is coming upon us". — Our Rabbis interpreted this to refer to one who is obliged to buy produce in the market (who does not possess any of his own),
ולא תאמין בחייך AND THOU SHALT HAVE NONE ASSURANCE OF THY LIFE — this they refer to one who must rely on the baker (cf. Menachot 103b).

Verse 67

בבקר תאמר מי יתן ערב IN THE MORNING THOU SHALT SAY, WOULD IT WERE EVEN! — i.e. would that it were again yesterday evening,
ובערב תאמר מי יתן בקר AND AT EVEN THOU SHALT SAY, WOULD IT WERE MORNING! — i.e. the morning of today, because the misery will constantly grow more severe, and the curse of each hour will be greater than that of the preceding (cf. Sotah 49a).

Verse 68

באניות [AND THE LORD WILL BRING THEE INTO EGYPT AGAIN] באניות — the latter word means, in ships, i.e. He will bring you again into captivity to Egypt.
והתמכרתם שם לאיבי׳ך means, you will seek to be sold to them for slaves and handmaids (i.e. YOU WILL OFFER YOURSELVES FOR SALE),
ואין קנה AND NO MAN WILL BUY YOU — because they will pass upon you the doom of death and extermination.
והתמכרתם — "et pour vendrez yous" in old French It would not, however, be correct to explain והתמכרתם in the sense of ונמכרתם "and you will be sold" — i.e. by sellers other than yourselves, for it adds afterwards: "but no one will buy you".

Verse 69

לכרת את בני ישראל [THE COVENANT WHICH THE LORD COMMANDED …] TO MAKE WITH THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — that they will take upon themselves the observance of the Torah under an imprecation and oath (cf. Deuteronomy 29:11).
מלבד הברית BESIDES THE COVENANT — i.e. the curses in Torath Cohanim (Leviticus 26:14 ff.) which were spoken at Sinai (Horeb).

Chapter 29

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

ולא נתן ה' לכם לב לדעת YET THE LORD HATH NOT GIVEN YOU A HEART TO KNOW — i.e. to understand the loving-kindnesses of the Omnipresent and to cleave unto Him.
עד היום הזה UNTO THIS DAY — I have heard that on the day when Moses gave the Book of the Law to the sons of Levi, as it is written, (Deuteronomy 31:9) "And he gave it to the priests the sons of Levi", all Israel came before Moses and said to him: Teacher Moses, we, too, stood at Sinai and accepted the Torah, and it was given to us; why, then, do you give the people of your tribe control over it, that they may tomorrow say to us, "Not to you was it given, but to us was it given"? Moses rejoiced at this matter and in reference to this he said to them, (Deuteronomy 27:9) "This day have you become the people [of the Lord thy God]", meaning, Only this day have I come to understand that you are attached to and have a desire for the Omnipresent.

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

ותבאו אל המקום הזה AND YOU CAME TO THIS PLACE — Now you see yourselves in greatness and glory (you have defeated Sihon and Og); do not rebel against the Omnipresent nor let your hearts be proud, ושמרתם את דברי הברית הזאת BUT KEEP THE WORDS OF THIS COVENANT. — Another explanation of AND THE LORD HAS NOT GIVEN YOU A HEART TO UNDERSTAND [UNTO THIS DAY] — for no-one can fathom the depths of his teacher's mind nor the wisdom of his teaching until after forty years of study under him. Therefore the Omnipresent has not dealt with you so strictly until this day (after forty years' instruction of the Torah), but from now and onward He will deal strictly with you — therefore ושמרתם את דברי הברית הזאת וגו׳ KEEP THE WORDS OF THIS COVENANT etc. (Avodah Zarah 5b).

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

אתם נצבים YE ARE STANDING THIS DAY [ALL OF YOU BEFORE THE LORD] — This teaches that Moses assembled them in the presence of the Omnipresent on the day of his death, in order to initiate them into a covenant with Him. ראשיכם שבטיכם means as much as ראשיכם לשבטיכם YOUR HEADS OF YOUR TRIBES. זקניכם ושטריכם YOUR ELDERS AND YOUR OFFICERS — The more prominent were in front (i.e. they stood before the Lord in the order of their rank), and afterwards: "all the men of Israel".

Verse 10

מחטב עציך FROM THE WOODCUTTER [UNTO THE DRAWER OF THE WATER] — This teaches that some of the Canaanites came in Moses' days to become proselytes just as the Gibeonites came in the days of Joshua, — and this is the meaning of what is stated of the Gibeonites, (Joshua 9:4) "And they also acted cunningly"; — and Moses made them woodcutters and drawers of water (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Nitzavim 2).

Verse 11

לעברך means THAT THOU SHOULDEST PASS [INTO THE COVENANT]. It would not, however, be correct to explain it as meaning "to make thee pass" (when the suffix would be objective), but it must be explained like (Deuteronomy 4:14) לעשתכם אתם, "that ye may do them".
לעברך בברית THAT THOU SHOULDEST PASS INTO THE COVENANT — The way of "passing" was as follows: those who made a covenant used to make a partition (i.e. used to place objects in a straight line) on one side and a partition on the other and passed between them, as it is said, (Jeremiah 34:18—20) "[And I will give the men which have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before Me] when they cut the calf in two, and passed between the parts thereof … [into the hands of their enemies]".

Verse 12

למען הקים אתך היום לו לעם THAT HE MAY ESTABLISH THEE TO-DAY FOR A PEOPLE UNTO HIMSELF — He undertakes so much trouble (in making another covenant

with you) in order that He may keep (הקים) you for a people in His presence,
והוא יהיה לך לאלהים SINCE HE MUST BE UNTO THEE A GOD, because He has promised it unto you and has sworn unto your fathers not to exchange their descendants for another nation. For this reason He binds you by these oaths not to provoke Him to anger since He, on His part, cannot dissociate Himself from you. — Thus far I have given an exposition according to the literal sense of the chapter. An Agadic explanation, however, is: Why is the section beginning with the words, "Ye are standing this day" put in juxtaposition to the curses in the previous chapter? Because when Israel heard these ninety-eight curses besides the forty-nine that are contained in Torath-Cohanim (Leviticus 26:14 ff.), their faces turned pale (they were horrified), and they exclaimed, "Who can possibly stand against these?!" Therefore Moses began to calm them: "See, you are standing today before the Lord!" — many a time have you provoked the Omnipresent to anger and yet He has not made an end to you, but you still continue in His presence (Midrash Tanchuma, Nitzavim 1).
היום THIS DAY — like the "day" which endures for ever, for though it becomes dark for a period it shines again, (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Nitzavim 1, Sanhedrin 110b); so has He made you shine (i.e. given you periods when you have had nought but happiness) and will again make you shine; and it is just the curses and the sufferings that give you permanence and stability (נצבים) before Him. — So, too, the section preceding this (1 ff. which follows immediately after the curses) consists of comforting words: "Ye have seen all the Lord did [before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, etc.]". — Another explanation of אתם נצבים: Because the Israelites were now passing from one leader to another, from Moses to Joshua, therefore he (Moses) made them stand in ranks (מצבה) that he might address admonitions to them. Similarly did Joshua (cf. Joshua 24:1) and similarly did Samuel, who said, (I Samuel 12:7): "Now therefore take your stand (התיצבו) that I may reason with you before the Lord", when they were leaving his hand (leadership) and were coming under the hand of Saul (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Nitzavim 1).

Verse 13

Verse 14

ואת אשר איננו פה [NOT WITH YOU ALONE DO I MAKE THIS COVENANT … BUT WITH HIM THAT STANDETH HERE …] AND ALSO WITH HIM THAT IS NOT HERE — i.e. with the generations that will be in future (i.e. Moses is not referring to persons who happened to be absent from the assembly, for it states, v. 10, that all were present: "You are standing this day all of you before the Lord") (Midrash Tanchuma, Nitzavim 3).

Verse 15

כי אתם ידעתם וגו׳ FOR YE KNOW [HOW WE HAVE ABODE IN THE LAND OF EGYPT] etc. — The meaning of these verses is: Because you have seen the conduct of the other nations, and perhaps the heart of one of you might beguile him to follow them, — as it goes on to state, "Lest there should be among you a man, or a woman … [whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord]", — on this account I must place you under an oath.

Verse 16

ותראו את שקוציהם AND YE HAVE SEEN THEIR ABOMINABLE THINGS — Idols are so termed because they are loathsome like unclean things that are held in abomination.
גלליהם THEIR IDOLS — thus termed because they are detestable (lit., malodorous) and loathsome like dung (גלל).
עץ ואבן [AND YE HAVE SEEN … THEIR IDOLS] WOOD AND STONE — Those of wood and stone you have seen exposed openly, because the heathen was not afraid lest they might be stolen; those of gold and silver, however, ARE WITH THEM (עמהם), in their "marbled halls" (cf. Rashi on Ezekel 8:12 whence he borrowed this expression), because they were afraid they might be stolen (Midrash Tanchuma, Nitzavim 3).

Verse 17

פן יש בכם means PERHAPS (פן = שמא) THERE IS AMONG YOU,
אשר לבבו פנה היום [A MAN …] WHOSE HEART TURNETH AWAY THIS DAY from accepting the covenant upon himself,
שרש פרה ראש ולענה [PERHAPS THERE IS AMONG YOU] A ROOT THAT IS FRUITFUL IN POISONOUS HERB AND WORMWOOD — i.e. a root that brings forth herbs bitter as wormwood-plants, which are very bitter. The meaning is: Lest there be a man or woman or family or tribe that fruitfully produces and increases wickedness in your midst.

Verse 18

והתברך בלבבו AND HE BLESS HIMSELF IN HIS HEART — The word והתברך has the meaning of "blessing". In his heart he will imagine for himself a blessing of peace, saying, "These curses will not come upon me, I shall have peace".
והתברך is benoir soi in old French, i.e. the verb is reflexive like והתגלח, "he shall shave himself", והתפלל, he shall pray lit., he shall make himself the object of intercession.
בשררות לבי אלך means IN THE VIEWS OF MY HEART WILL I WALK, שררות being of a root which means to look, to see, as (Numbers 25:17): "I shall see him (אשרנו), but not now"; it is as much as to say, I will follow what my heart sees good to do.
למען ספות הרוה TO ADD DRUNKENNESS [TO THE THIRST] — In order that I may add punishment for him even for the sins he has committed until now inadvertently (for which the figurative expression in this sentence is הרוה, drunkenness: cf. the following passage in Rashi), and which I used to overlook; — but now he causes Me to combine them with those committed with premeditation and to exact punishment from him for everything. Onkelos, too, rendered it in a similar sense: "in order to add for him the sins of inadvertence to those of premeditation", which can only mean. "In order that "I" may add sins of inadvertence to those of presumption".
הרוה DRUNKENNESS figuratively describes the condition of a שוגג, one who acts inadvertently. The expression is an apt one because he acts like a drunken man who does things unwittingly,
הצמאה THE THIRST aptly describes the attitude of one who acts wittingly and out of desire.

Verse 19

יעשן אף ה׳ THE ANGER OF THE LORD SHALL SMOKE [AGAINST THAT MAN] — Through anger the body becomes heated and smoke, as it were, issues from the nostrils. And thus does it state, (Psalms 18:9) "Smoke rose up in his nostril". Although this idea is not really applicable to God, Scripture makes the human ear hear the matter (i.e. it tells it to him) in the manner that it is accustomed and able to understand according to the ordinary course of the world (i.e. when speaking of God it uses language

that properly is applicable only to human beings because this the only language we have at our command).
וקנאתו — This is a term denoting wrath, emportment in old French; it means: retaining one's hold on the 'garment of vengeance', and not forgoing one's right to punish.

Verse 20

הכתובה בספר התורה הזה — Above, however, (Deuteronomy 28:61) it says: And every sickness and every plague … [which is not written] בספר התורה (הזאת הזאת the feminine form, whilst here we have הזה, the masculine)?! But the explanation is: הזאת, the feminine form, refers to the feminine word התורה, whilst הזה, the masculine form, refers to the masculine word הספר in our text. Through the division into clauses by means of the tonic accents (which serve also as marks of interpunctuation) they (the two phrases) are shown to be two different expressions: in the chapter containing the curses (ch. Deuteronomy 28:61) the Tipcha (a disjunctive accent) is placed beneath the word בספר, and the words התורה הזאת are connected one with the other, therefore it says הזאת, the feminine form, (since it has to be connected with a feminine noun), whilst here the Tipcha is placed beneath the word התורה, and consequently the words ספר התורה are connected one with the other (i.e. they form one phrase), — therefore it is a masculine word that is applicable after it, because the term (the pronoun) refers to הספר (which is masculine).

Verse 21

Verse 22

Verse 23

Verse 24

Verse 25

לא ידעום [FOR THEY … SERVED OTHER GODS] WHOM THEY KNEW NOT — i.e. in whom they had never experienced any Divine power.
ולא חלק להם means, He did not give them (the gods) to be their portion (cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 4:19). Onkelos, however, renders it by לא אוטיבא להון, i.e. they did not bestow upon them any good. As for the expression לא חלק, Onkelos took it thus, explaining also the singular form of the verb: that god which they have chosen for themselves has never given them any חלק, any inheritance or portion.

Verse 26

Verse 27

וישם ה׳ — Understand this as the Targum has it: וטלטלינון, "and He cast them out". Similar is, (Jeremiah 12:14) "Behold, I cast them out (נתשם) from their land".

Verse 28

הנסתרת לה' אלהינו THE SECRET THINGS BELONG UNTO THE LORD OUR GOD — And if you say, "But what can we do? Thou threatenest the many (the whole community) with punishment because of the sinful thoughts of one individual, as it is said, (v. 17): "Lest there should be among you a man, [or a woman or a family … whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord …]", and afterwards it states, (v. 21) "And they will see the plagues of that land". But surely no man can know the secret thoughts of his fellow! Now, I reply: I do not threaten to punish you because of secret thoughts for these belong to the Lord our God and He will exact punishment from that individual; but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children that we may put away the evil from our midst; and if we do not execute judgment upon them, the whole community will be punished. — There are dots on the words לנו ולבנינו to suggest that even for the revealed sins (those committed openly), He did not punish the community until they had crossed the Jordan — from the moment when they took upon themselves the oath on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal and had thus become responsible for one another (Sanhedrin 43b; cf. Sotah 37b).

Chapter 30

Verse 1

Verse 2

Verse 3

ושב ה' אלהיך את שבותך THEN THE LORD THY GOD WILL TURN THY CAPTIVITY — To express this idea it ought to have written והשיב את שבותך, "then He will bring back thy captivity". But our Rabbis learned from this that, if one can say so of God, His Divine presence dwells with Israel in all the misery of their exile, so that when they are redeemed (i.e. when He speaks of their being redeemed), He makes Scripture write "Redemption" of Himself (i.e. He makes it state that He will be redeemed) — that He will return with them (Megillah 29a). Furthermore the following may be said in explaining the strange form ושב... את, — that the day of the gathering of the exiles is so important and is attended with such difficulty that it is as though He (God) Himself must actually seize hold of each individual's hands dragging him from his place (so that God Himself returns with the exile), as it is said, (Isaiah 27:12) "And ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel". We find, however, the same expression in connection with the gathering of the exiles of other nations also, as e.g. (Jeremiah 48:47): ושבתי שבות מואב "And I shall bring back the exiles of Moab".

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

Verse 7

Verse 8

Verse 9

Verse 10

Verse 11

לא נפלאת הוא ממך [FOR THIS COMMANDMENT …] IS NOT נפלאת FROM YOU i.e. is not concealed from you, just as it is said, (Deuteronomy 17:8): כי יפלא which is rendered in the Targum by "If there be concealed [from thee]"; and (Lamentations 1:9): ותרד פלאים which means, she went down into concealment, i.e. being covered and bound in the place of concealment.

Verse 12

לא בשמים הוא IT IS NOT IN HEAVEN — for were it in heaven it would still be your duty to go up after it and to learn it (Eruvin 55a).

Verse 13

Verse 14

כי קרוב אליך BUT [THE WORD] IS [VERY] NEAR UNTO YOU — the Torah has been given to you in writing and orally.

Verse 15

את החיים ואת הטוב LIFE AND GOOD — the one is dependent upon the other: if you do good, behold, there is life for you, and if you do evil, behold, there is death for you. Scripture goes on to explain how this is:

Verse 16

אשר אנכי מצוך היום לאהבה IN THAT I COMMAND THEE THIS DAY TO LOVE [THE LORD THY GOD] — You have here a description of the "good", and upon this depends וחיית ורבית THAT YOU MAY LIVE AND INCREASE — here you have life.

Verse 17

ואם יפנה לבבך BUT IF THINE HEART TURN AWAY — here you have evil,

Verse 18

כי אבד תאבדון [I TELL YOU THIS DAY] THAT YE SHALL PERISH — here you have death.

Verse 19

העדתי בכם היום את השמים ואת הארץ I CALL AS WITNESSES AGAINST YOU THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH, which exist for ever, and when evil will befall you they will be witnesses that I have warned you regarding all this (cf. Targum Jonathan on). Another explanation of העדתי בכם את השמים וגו׳ I CALL THE HEAVEN [AND THE EARTH] AS WITNESSES AGAINST YOU: The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel, "Look at the heavens which I have created to be at your service; have they perhaps ever changed their character? Has the orb of the sun perhaps ever failed to rise in the East and to give light to the whole world, just as is stated, (Ecclesiastes 1:4—5) "And the sun riseth, and the sun goeth down [and hasteth to its place where it arises]"?! Look at the earth which I have created to be at your service! Has it perhaps ever changed its character? Have you perhaps sown it and it did not bring forth, or have you sown wheat and it brought forth barley?! Now how is it with these that have been made neither with the end in view that they should receive a reward nor that they should suffer a loss — for if they act meritoriously (if they follow the natural laws by which they are governed) they receive no reward and if they were to fail they would receive no punishment? They have never changed their character! You, who if you act meritoriously do receive a reward and if you sin do receive punishment, how much the more so should you obey the commands of your Maker! (Sifrei Devarim 306:1).
ובחרת בחיים THEREFORE CHOOSE THE LIFE — I show you these ("I set life and death before thee) in order that you may choose the portion of life. It is like a man who says to his son, "Choose for yourself a good portion of my real estate", and sets him in the best portion saying to him, "Choose this!" And concerning this it states, (Psalms 16:5) "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup, אתה תומיך גורלי", i.e. "You place my hand on the good lot, saying, 'Choose this!'"

Chapter 31

Verse 1

Verse 2

וילך משה וגו'... אנכי היום AND MOSES WENT... I AM [HUNDRED AND TWENTY YEARS OLD] THIS DAY — Today my days and my years become full: for on this day (the seventh of Adar; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 1:3) I was born and on this day I must die (Sotah 13b).
לא אוכל עוד לצאת ולבוא I CAN NO LONGER GO OUT AND COME IN — One might think that this was because his physical strength failed him! Scripture, however, states (Deuteronomy 34:7) "His eye was not dim nor his natural force abated!" What then is the meaning of לא אוכל? It means: "I am not permitted" (cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 12:17 and Deuteronomy 24:4), because the power (leadership) is being taken from me and given to Joshua. — Another explanation of לצאת ולבוא is: I can no more take the lead in the

matter of the Law; this teaches us that the traditions and the well-springs of wisdom were stopped up for him (cf. Sotah 13b).
וה' אמר אלי — This (according to the previous comment) is the explanation of לא אוכל עוד לצאת ולבוא: I can no more go out and come in because (ו = because) the Lord has said unto Me, [Thou shalt not pass over this Jordan].

Verse 3

Verse 4

Verse 5

Verse 6

לא ירפך means He will give you no looseness that you should be abandoned by Him (cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 4:31).

Verse 7

כי אתה תבוא את העם הזה — Translate this as the Targum does: ארי אתה תעול עם עמא הדין, THOU SHALT GO WITH THIS PEOPLE. Moses, by the statement "Thou shall go with this people" (as one of them) said in effect to Joshua: The elders of the generation will be with thee: everything has to be done according to their opinion and their advice. The Holy One, blessed be He, however, said to Joshua, (v. 23) "For thou shalt bring (תביא) the children of Israel into the land which I swore unto them" — thou shalt bring them even against their will; everything depends on you alone: if necessary take a stick and beat them over the head: there can be but one leader for a generation, and not two leaders for a generation (Sanhedrin 8a).

Verse 8

Verse 9

ויכתב משה... ויתנה AND MOSES WROTE [THIS LAW] AND GAVE IT [UNTO THE PRIESTS, THE SONS OF LEVI] — When it was completely finished he gave it to the sons of his tribe.

Verse 10

מקץ שבע שנים AT THE END OF EVERY SEVEN YEARS [AT THE APPOINTED SEASON OF THE SHEMITTAH YEAR] — This means in the first year of the new Shemittah-period — in the eighth year (Sotah 41a). But why does Scripture call it the "Shemittah-year", which name usually implies the seventh year? Because the law of the "seventh year" still applies to it, viz., in connection with the harvest of the seventh year's produce that actually goes forth into (takes place in) the year following the seventh year (the eighth year) (Rosh Hashanah 12b; cf. Rashi on Exodus 34:21).

Verse 11

תקרא את התורה הזאת [WHEN ALL ISRAEL IS COME TO APPEAR BEFORE THE LORD …] THOU SHALT READ THIS LAW [BEFORE ALL ISRAEL] — The king read from the beginning of the section "These are the words" (Deuteronomy 1:1), — as is set forth in Treatise Sotah 41a — upon a wooden platform that was erected in the forecourt.

Verse 12

האנשים [ASSEMBLE THE PEOPLE,] MEN [WOMEN, AND LITTLE ONES] — the men, in order to learn,
והנשים THE WOMEN, in order to listen to the words of the Law,
והטף AND THE LITTLE ONES — Why did they come? For no other purpose than that a reward should be given to those who bring them (Chagigah 3a).

Verse 13

Verse 14

ואצונו means, THAT I MAY EXHORT HIM.

Verse 15

Verse 16

נכר הארץ [THIS PEOPLE WILL … GO ASTRAY AFTER THE GODS OF] נכר הארץ — i.e., [after the gods of] the peoples of the land (Onkelos).

Verse 17

והסתרתי פני AND I WILL HIDE MY FACE FROM THEM, as though I do not see their distress.

Verse 18

Verse 19

את השירה הזאת [NOW THEREFORE WRITE YE] THIS SONG — i.e. the text "Give ear, O ye heavens", till "and make expiation for his ground, and his people" (Deuteronomy 32:1—43).

Verse 20

ונאצוני means AND THEY WILL PROVOKE ME TO ANGER. So, too, every form of the root נאץ denotes anger.

Verse 21

ועתה השירה הזאת לפניו לעד [AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS …] THAT THIS SONG SHALL TESTIFY that in it I had warned them concerning all the things that had befallen them.
כי לא תשכח מפי זרעו FOR IT SHALL NOT BE FORGOTTEN OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF THEIR SEED — This is an assurance to Israel that the Torah in which this

song is contained will never be entirely forgotten by their descendants (Shabbat 138b).

Verse 22

Verse 23

ויצו את יהושע בן נון AND HE COMMANDED JOSHUA THE SON OF NUN — This has to be connected with v. 14 above, and it refers to the Shechinah (to God; "He commanded" means "God commanded"), as it distinctly states here "[for thou shalt bring the children of Israel] into the land which "I" swore unto them, [and "I" will be with thee]".

Verse 24

Verse 25

Verse 26

לקח — The grammatical form and its meaning are the same as in (Exodus 20:8) זכור; (Deuteronomy 5:12) שמור; (Jeremiah 2:2) הלוך.
מצד ארון ברית ה׳ [TAKE THIS BOOK OF THE LAW AND PUT IT] AT THE SIDE OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT OF THE LORD — The sages of Israel differ about it (the meaning of the phrase "at the side of the Ark") in Treatise Bava Batra 14a. Some of them say: A board projected from the Ark outside it and there it (the song) lay, whilst others say that it lay at the side of the Tablets within the Ark.

Verse 27

Verse 28

הקהילו אלי ASSEMBLE UNTO ME [ALL THE ELDERS OF YOUR TRIBE] — They did not, however, blow the trumpets that day to call the congregation together (as is prescribed in Numbers 10:3), because it states (Numbers 10:2) "Make for thee [two trumpets of silver]" (which Rashi explains to mean that no one should use them except himself), and he had not empowered Joshua to use them. Indeed they were hidden away even during his (Moses) lifetime — on the day of his death, thus fulfilling the words of the text, (Ecclesiastes 8:8) "There is no authority on the day of death" (cf. Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 2 on ויחי and Midrash Tanchuma, Beha'alotcha 10 on בהעלתך).
ואעידה בם את השמים ואת הארץ I WILL CALL THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH AS WITNESSES AGAINST THEM — But if you ask, "Behold he has already above (Deuteronomy 30:19) called heaven and earth as witnesses: "I call [the heaven and the earth] as witnesses this day against you etc."?! Then I reply: There he said this to the Israelites (he told them that He would do this), but now he intends to say (Deuteronomy 32:1) "Give ear, O ye heavens, [and I will speak; and hear earth] etc.", thus calling them as witnesses.

Verse 29

אחרי מותי כי השחת תשחתון [FOR I KNOW THAT] AFTER MY DEATH YE WILL UTTERLY CORRUPT YOURSELVES — But, you see, as a matter of fact, that all the days of Joshua they did not corrupt themselves, for it states, (Judges 2:7) "And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua"?! (How, then, could Moses say that they would corrupt themselves after his death, by which he evidently meant immediately after his death, cf. v. 16)? But we may derive from here that one's pupil should be as dear to him as his own self: — it appeared to Moses that so long as Joshua would live it would be as though he himself would be living (he thus alluded by the words "after my death" to a period after Joshua's death).

Chapter 32

Verse 1

האזינו השמים HEAR YE HEAVENS that I warn Israel, and be ye witnesses to this matter; for so I have told them that ye will be witnesses (cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 31:28). Similar is the meaning of ותשמע הארץ (i.e. the verb has the force of an imperative: AND LET THE EARTH HEAR). And why did He call heaven and earth as witnesses against them? Moses thought: "I am a being of flesh and blood (mortal); tomorrow I shall be dead. If the Israelites will once say, 'We have never accepted the covenant', who can come and refute them?" Therefore he called heaven and earth as witnesses against them — witnesses that endure forever (Sifrei Devarim 306:15). And a further reason was that if they should act worthily, the witnesses might come and give them their reward: the vine might yield its fruit, the ground give its increase, the heaven bestow its dew; while if they should act sinfully, the hand of the witnesses might first be against them (Rashi uses a phrase similar to that used of human witnesses; cf. e.g. Deuteronomy 13:10): "and He will restrain the heaven, that there be no rain, and the earth will not give its increase; and you shall perish quickly" (Deuteronomy 11:17) — through the attacks of other nations (Tanchuma 5:10:1).

Verse 2

יערף כמטר לקחי MY DOCTRINE DROPPETH AS RAIN — This is the evidence that ye will have to give: that in your presence I declare that the Torah which I gave to Israel (לקחי) is life to the world as the rain which is life to the world (cf. Sifrei Devarim 306:17) — even as the heavens drop down dew and rain.
יערף means, IT DROPS. Similar is (Psalms 65:12) "[And thy paths] drop fatness" (ירעפון, where ערף = רעף); (Deuteronomy 33:28) "[also his heavens] shall drop down (יערפו) dew".
תזל כטל IT FLOWS AS THE DEW in which everybody rejoices. He adds this because rain involves annoyance to some people, as, for instance, to those on a journey, or a man whose pit (the pit into which the wine flows when the grapes are being pressed) is full of wine (which thus becomes spoiled) (Sifrei Devarim 306:17).
כשעירים — This word has the same meaning as in (Psalms 148:8) "stormy (סערה) wind" (the ס and ש interchanging), as the Targum has it: כרוחי מטרא "like winds that bring rain". How is it with the winds? They strengthen the herbage and promote their growth! So, too, the words of the Torah promote the moral growth of those who study them (Sifrei Devarim 306:18).

וכרביבים — these are DROPS OF RAIN. It seems to me that it (the rain) is called רביב because it shoots down like an arrow, just as you say, (i.e. just as the text reads) (Genesis 21:20) "A shooter (רבה) with the bow".
דשא — herbaries in old French. English herbage — the vesture of the ground when it is covered with vegetation (greens).
עשב HERB — a single stalk is called עשב and similarly each species of herbs by itself is called עשב (whilst דשא denotes vegetation in general). (Cf. Rashi on Genesis 1:11 and Note thereon).

Verse 3

כי שם ה' אקרא WHEN I SHALL CALL THE NAME OF THE LORD [ASCRIBE YE GREATNESS UNTO OUR GOD] — You see, כי is here used in the meaning of "when", similar to (Leviticus 23:10) "When (כי) ye come into the land". The meaning is: when I proclaim and mention the Name of the Lord, YE ASCRIBE GREATNESS TO OUR GOD and bless His name. From here they (the Rabbis) derived the law that people make the response, "Blessed be the Name of His glorious Kingdom for ever and ever", after the recital of a Benediction in the Temple (Sifrei Devarim 306:37; Berakhot 21a; Taanit 16b).

Verse 4

הצור תמים פעלו THE ROCK, HIS WORK IS PERFECT — Although He is strong (הצור!) yet when He brings punishment upon those who transgress His will, He does not bring it in a flood of anger, but in deliberate judgment, because תמים פעלו HIS WORK IS PERFECT.
אל אמונה A GOD OF FAITHFULNESS — faithful to recompense the righteous their righteousness in the world to come; and even though He defers their recompense, in the end He will prove faithful (אמן) to His promise.
ואין עול AND WITHOUT INJUSTICE — even to the wicked He pays the reward for their meritorious deeds, but in this world (Sifrei Devarim 307:11; cf. Rashi on Deuteronomy 7:10).
צדיק וישר הוא — The meaning is: All acknowledge His judgment to be just (צדיק), and this is befitting and right of them (ישר), i.e., He is declared צדיק by the mouth of men, וישר, and it is right for them to declare Him צדיק, as righteous.

Verse 5

שחת לו — Take it as the Targum has it: חבילו להון לא לה "Corruption is theirs, not His".
בניו מומם HIS CHILDREN, THEIR FAULT — i.e., they were His children, and the corruption which they wrought is their fault.
בניו מומם means: it was the fault of His children not His fault.
דור עקש means, [A] CROOKED AND PERVERTED [GENERATION]. עקש has the same meaning as the verb in (Micah 3:9) "and pervert (יעקשו) all equity". In Mishnaic Hebrew we have (Chullin 56a): a weasel whose teeth are bent and crooked (עקושות).
ופתלתל entortille in old French, Engl, twisted: like a thread (פתיל), which one twines and twists round the central strand. The word פתלתל is of the "doubled" words (in which the two last letters are the same), like (Leviticus 13:49): אדמדם. ירקרק; (Psalms 38:31): סחרחר; (1 Kings 7:23; Targum Jonathan on): סגלגל.

Verse 6

הלה׳ תגמלו זאת DO YOU THUS REQUITE THE LORD? — This Is an expression of astonishment: Do you mean to grieve Him Who has the power to punish you, and Who has bestowed all these favours upon you?

עם נבל A FOOLISH PEOPLE — i.e., a people that has forgotten all that has been done to them,
ולא חכם AND NOT WISE to consider what will result from their actions, viz., that it is in His power to do them good or evil according to their actions (cf. Siphre).
הלא הוא אביך קנך IS NOT HE THY FATHER קנך? The last word may mean: Who has acquired (קנה) thee, or, Who has placed thee (more lit., made thee nest, קנן) in a nest of rocks and in strong ground, or. Who has fitted you out (תקן) with everything that will benefit you.
הוא עשך HE HATH MADE THEE a nation among the nations of the world,
ויכוננך AND HATH ESTABLISHED THEE afterwards on every kind of firm base and foundation (כון) (i.e. made you self-contained): out of your midst come your priests, out of your midst your Levites, and out of your midst your kings — a city in which is everything (Sifrei Devarim 309:7; Chullin 56b).

Verse 7

זכר ימות עולם REMEMBER THE DAYS OF OLD — what He did to previous generations who provoked Him to anger,
בינו שנות דר ודר [CONSIDER] THE YEARS OF GENERATION AFTER GENERATION — the generation of Enosh over whom He caused the waters of the ocean to flow, and the generations of the flood whom He drowned by flood (cf. Sifrei Devarim 310:1). Another explanation is: If you have not set your attention to the past (i.e. if you fail to remember the days of old, then) בינו שנות דר ודר CONSIDER at least THE YEARS OF GENERATION AND GENERATION so that you become conscious of what might happen in the future — that He has the power to bestow good upon you and to make you inherit the blissful days of Messiah and the world to come (cf. Sifrei Devarim 310:5).
שאל אביך ASK THY FATHER — these are the prophets who are termed fathers, as it is stated in the history of Elijah that Elisha exclaimed when Elijah departed, (2 Kings 2:12): “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel!” (cf. Sifrei Devarim 310:3).
זקניך THY ELDERS — these are the sages,
ויאמרו לך AND THEY WILL TELL THEE the events of the former days:

Verse 8

בהנחל עליון גוים WHEN THE MOST HIGH DIVIDED TO THE NATIONS THEIR INHERITANCE — when the Holy One, blessed be He gave those who provoked Him to anger their inheritance, He afterwards caused the flood to pass over them and He drowned them (Sifrei Devarim 311:1)
בהפרידו בני אדם WHEN HE SEPARATED THE SONS OF ADAM — i.e. when He scattered the generation which witnessed the separation of races, He also had the power to remove them from the world, yet He did not do so, but
יצב גבלת עמים HE FIRMLY ESTABLISHED THE BOUNDARIES OF THE NATIONS — He let them (the peoples) remain in existence and did not destroy them,
למספר בני ישראל ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL — i.e. because of the number of the children of Israel that were in future to descend from Shem’s sons, and in accordance with the number of seventy souls of the children of Israel who went down to Egypt He firmly established גבלת עמים THE NATIONS ACCORDING TO THEIR BOUNDARIES — i.e. seventy separate nations (cf. Sifrei Devarim 311:5).

Verse 9

כי חלק ה' עמו FOR THE PORTION OF THE LORD, HIS PEOPLE — Why all this? (Why did He save them from destruction?) because His portion was

comprised in them and was destined to come forth. And who is His portion? עמו HIS PEOPLE. And Who is His people?
יעקב חבל נחלתו JACOB THE ROPE OF HIS INHERITANCE — and he is the third amongst the patriarchs, who is endowed with three merits: the merit of his grandfather, the merit of his father and his own merit thus altogether three — like a rope (חבל) that is made up of three strands. Only he and his sons became His inheritance, not, however, Ishmael, Abraham's son, nor Esau, Isaac's son (cf. Sifrei Devarim 312:3),

Verse 10

ימצאהו בארץ מדבר HE FOUND HIM IN A DESERT LAND — for them (Jacob's sons) he found to be faithful to Him in the desert land, when they accepted His Torah, His sovereignty and His yoke, something that Ishmael and Esau had refused to do, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 33:2) "And He shone from the Seir (Esau) unto them, He appeared from Mount Paran (Ishmael)" (cf. Rashi on that verse).
ובתהו ילל ישמן AND IN THE DESOLATE HOWLING SOLITUDE — i.e. in a land of drought and desolation, a place of screeching monsters and ostriches; even there they adhered to their faith and did not say to Moses, "But how can we go out into the wilderness, a place of drought and desolation?" — just as it is stated, (Jeremiah 2:2) "[I remember the loving kindness of your youth, the love of your espousals,] When you went after Me in the wilderness, [in to a land that was not sown]" (cf. Rashi on Exodus 12:39).
יסבבנהו HE SURROUNDED HIM — there He surrounded them and encompassed them with the "clouds of Glory"; He surrounded them with the banners on their four sides; he surrounded them by the underside of the mountain (Sinai), which He arched over them like a cask (cf. Sifrei Devarim 313:11).
יבוננהו HE INSTRUCTED HIM there in Torah and wisdom.
יצרנהו HE GUARDED HIM from snakes, serpents and scorpions and from hostile nations,
כאישון עינו AS THE אישון OF HIS EYE — that is the black in the eye from which the light comes. Onkelos, however, rendered ימצאהו by "He provided Him" with all He needed in the wilderness. It took the words to be of the same meaning as, (Numbers 11:22) "[Shall the flocks … be slain for them] to suffice (ומצא) them?" and (Joshua 17:16) "The hill is not enough (ימצא) for us".
יסבבנהו — Onkelos renders this by "He made them abide round about His Divine dwelling place" — the "tent of congregation" in the middle and the divisions of the tribes (lit., the banners) on the four sides.

Verse 11

כנשר יעיר קנו AS AN EAGLE STIRRETH UP ITS NEST — He guided them with mercy and pity like the eagle which is full of pity towards his young and does not enter its nest suddenly — before it beats and flaps with its wings above its young passing between tree and tree, between branch and branch, in order that its young may awake and have enough strength to receive it (Sifrei Devarim 314:1).
יעיר קנו means, AWAKENS ITS YOUNG (i.e. קן, "nest" is a term for young birds).
על גוזליו ירחף IT HOVERETH OVER ITS YOUNG — it does not press heavily upon them, but hovers above them — touching them and yet not touching them. So too, the Holy One, blessed be He, (Job. 37:23) "The Almighty, we did not find Him to be too powerful in strength": when He came to give the Torah to Israel, He did not reveal Himself from one side, (thus concentrating His power at one point), but from four sides, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 33:2) "The Lord came from Sinai, and shone forth from

Seir unto them; He appeared from Mount Paran"; also (Habakkuk 3:3) "God came from Teman" — this is the fourth side (Sifrei Devarim 314:1).
יפרש כנפיו יקחהו [AS AN EAGLE …] SPREADETH ABROAD ITS WINGS, TAKETH IT — When it comes to remove them (the young) from one place to another, it does not take them with its claws, as other birds do: because other birds are afraid of the eagle that soars so high and flies above them, therefore they carry them (the young) by their (the mother's) claws for fear of the eagle. But the eagle is afraid only of an arrow, therefore it carries them (the young) on its wings, saying, "It is better that the arrow pierce me than that it should pierce my young". So, too, the Holy One, blessed be He, says, (Exodus 19:4) "I bare you as on eagles wings" (Mekhilta): when the Egyptians marched after them and overtook them at the Red Sea, they threw arrows and stone missiles at them, whereupon at once "The angel of God moved … and came between the camp of Egypt [and the camp of Israel]" that it might receive the arrows etc. (Exodus 14:19—20 And Rashi thereon).

Verse 12

ה׳ בדד ינחנו THE LORD ALONE GUIDED THEM — i.e. He guided them in the wilderness alone (unassisted) and yet in security,
ואין עמו אל נכר AND THERE WAS NO STRANGE GOD WITH HIM — for not one of the gods of the other peoples possessed the power to display its might and to war with them. — Our Rabbis, however, explained it as a promise referring to the future (cf. Sifrei Devarim 315), and so, too, does Onkelos render it. But I say that they (the statements of this chapter) are words of reproof which he said with the view of calling heaven and earth as witnesses against them, and also in order that this song (cf. Deuteronomy 31:21) should be witness, because He knew (Deuteronomy 31:29) that they would in future prove faithless and would bear in mind neither the past (lit., the first) deeds that He performed for them nor those that would come to pass (lit., that would be born), which at a future time He would do for them. For this reason it is necessary to make the text fit in with this and with that (the past and the future). Indeed, the whole section is to be connected with (v. 7) "Remember the days of old (i.e., the past), consider the years of generation after generation" (the future) (cf. Rashi on that verse): Thus has He done for them and thus will He in the future do for them — all this they ought to bear in mind.

Verse 13

ירכבהו על במתי ארץ HE MADE HIM RIDE ON THE HIGH PLACES OF THE EARTH — The entire text (vv. 13 and 14) is to be understood metaphorically as the Targum has it (i.e., as referring to Eretz Israel).
ירכבהו וגו׳ HE MADE HIM RIDE [UPON THE HIGH PLACES] — This expression is used because the land of Israel is higher than all other countries (Sifrei Devarim 316:1).
ויאכל תנובת שדי THAT HE MIGHT EAT THE PRODUCE OF THE FIELDS — This refers to the fruits of the land of Israel which are quicker to shoot (נוב) and to ripen than all the fruits of other countries (Sifrei Devarim 316:2).
וינקהו דבש מסלע AND HE MADE HIM SUCK HONEY OUT OF THE ROCK — Indeed it once happened that a man said to his son In Sichnin (a town in Galilee): "Bring me dried figs from the cask". He went and found the honey flowing over its brim. He said to him, "But this is a vat of honey (not of figs)". Thereupon he said to him: "Put your hands deep into it and you will bring up figs from it" (Sifrei Devarim 316:3).
במתי ארץ is an expression denoting height.
שדי has the same meaning as שדה, field.

מחלמיש צור (lit., out of the flint of the rock) — The meaning is: the strength and the hardness of the rock. — When it is not connected with the following word (that is, when it is used in the absolute state) it is vowelled שֶׁמֶן (as in Deuteronomy 8:15). whilst when it is connected (is in the construct state) it is punctuated שֶׁמֶן as here.
ושמן מחלמיש צור AND OIL OUT OF THE FLINTY ROCK — this refers to the olives of Giscala (a place in Galilee) (Sifrei Devarim 316:4).

Verse 14

חמאת בקר וחלב צאן [AND HE GAVE THEM TO EAT] CLOTTED CREAM OF THE HERD AND MILK OF THE FLOCK — This was in the days of Solomon, as it states (1 Kings 5:2—3): "[And Solomon's provision for one day was …] ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen (בקר) out of the pasture, and an hundred sheep (צאן)(Sifrei Devarim 317:1).
עם חלב כרים WITH FAT OF FATTENED LAMBS — This was in the days of the "Ten Tribes" (the period of the Northern Kingdom). as it is said, (Amos. 6:4) "Who eat lambs (כרים) of the flock" (Sifrei Devarim 317:1).
חלב כליות חטה [WITH] THE FAT OF KIDNEYS OF WHEAT — This again was in the days of Solomon, as it is said, (1 Kings 5:2) "And Solomon's provision for one day was [thirty measures of fine flour etc.]" (Sifrei Devarim 317:1).
ודם ענב תשתה חמר AND THOU SHALT DRINK THE FOAMING BLOOD OF THE GRAPE — this again was in the days of the "Ten Tribes" as it is said, (Amos 6:6) "That drink wine in bowls" (Sifrei Devarim 317:1).
חמאת בקר is the cream that is gathered from the surface of the milk.
וחלב צאן means, and milk of sheep (i.e. the first word is in the construct state); whenever it is connected with the following word it is vowelled בֶּן, as in (Deuteronomy 14:21) "in the milk of (בַּחֲלֵב) its mother".
כרים are SHEEP.
ואילים has its ordinary meaning: RAMS.
בני בשן RAMS OF THE BREED OF BASHAN — These were very fat.
כליות חטה KIDNEYS OF WHEAT — wheat that is fat as is the fat of kidneys and the kernels of which are as large as kidneys.
ודם ענב AND THE BLOOD OF THE GRAPE [THOU SHALT DRINK חמר] — This means: Thou shalt drink good wine, and taste wine of a fine and good quality.
חמר — This word means wine in general in the Aramaic language, but this (the word חמר in our verse) is not a noun but it means excellent in taste, vinos in old French, (English = vinous). — One may also expound these two verses according to the Targum of Onkelos which has: אשרינון על תקפי ארעא וגו׳, He made them dwell upon the strong places of the earth etc.

Verse 15

עבית has the meaning of "thickness" (stoutness), it therefore means: " Thou hast waxed fat".
כשית is the same as כסית (ס and ש interchanging). It has the same meaning as in Job 15:27 "Because he hath covered (כסה) his face with his fatness"— like a person who is full of fat inside and whose flanks therefore lie in folds outside, as it goes on to state, (Job 15:27) "and be made folds of fat on his flanks" (Sifrei Devarim 318:6).
כשית — There exists a Kal form (as is this word) in the sense of covering, as (Proverbs 12:16) "And a prudent man is covered with (וְכֹסֶה) shame". If it had written כְּשִׁיתָ with a dagesh in the ש. it would imply, "Thou hast covered others (or other things)" (i.e., it would be transitive), as in the text already quoted, "For he hath covered (כִּסָּה) his face".

וינבל צור ישעתו AND HE LIGHTLY ESTEEMED THE ROCK OF HIS SALVATION — This means, He showed contempt for Him and scorned Him, as it is said, (Ezekiel 8:16) "[and, behold, … there were … men] with their buttocks towards the Temple of the Lord" — surely, there can be no greater contempt than this (see Rashi on this verse) (Sifrei Devarim 318:9).

Verse 16

יקנאהו means, they made His anger and His jealousy (קנאה) glow.
בתועבת WITH ABOMINATIONS — i.e. with abominable deeds such as pederasty and sorcery, of which the term תועבה is used (cf. Leviticus 18:23 and Deuteronomy 18:10—12).

Verse 17

לא אלה — Understand this as the Targum does: They sacrifice unto devils in which is no utility, for if there were at least any utility in them to the world (as e.g:, the sun, moon and stars) God's jealousy would not have been so intense (lit. — doubled) as it is now. (Sifrei Devarim 318:13).
חדשים מקרב באו [THEY SACRIFICED … TO GODS] THAT CAME UP RECENTLY — i.e. with which even the heathen nations were not familiar. Indeed, if a heathen saw them he would say, "This is a Jewish idol" (Sifrei Devarim 318:14).
לא שערום אבתיכם — This means, which your fathers feared not; more literally it means: Their hair (שער) did not stand up on end because of them — for it is the nature of a person's hair to stand up out of fear. Thus is it (the word שערום) explained in Sifrei Devarim 318:15. But it is also possible to explain it as being connected with the noun in (Isaiah 13:21) "And שעירים shall dance there"; שעירים are demons (satyrs), and the meaning of our verse would then be: your fathers never made these satyrs.

Verse 18

תשי means THOU HAST FORGOTTEN. But our Rabbis explained it thus: whenever He was about to bestow good upon you, you provoked Him to anger and, as it were, weakened (תש) His power so that He could not do you good (Sifrei Devarim 319:3).
אל מחללך means, God Who has brought you forth out of the womb. It has the same meaning as in (Psalms 29:9) "[The voice of the Lord] makes hinds to bring forth (יחולל)", and (Psalms 48:7) "travail (חיל) as that of a woman in childbirth".

Verse 19

Verse 20

מה אחריתם [I WILL SEE] WHAT THEIR END SHALL BE — i.e. what will come upon them in the end.
כי דור תהפכת המה FOR THEY ARE A GENERATION OF PERVERSITY - i.e. they change (הפך) My goodwill into anger.
לא אמן בם means, My training is not evident in them, for I showed them the good way and they have deviated from it.
אמן is of the same meaning as in (Esther 2:7) "And he brought up (אמן) Hadassah". Nouriture in old French — Another explanation of אמן: it has the same meaning as אמונה, faithfulness, as the Targum takes it ("in whom there is no faithfulness"). At Sinai they said, "We will do and we will

hearken" and after a very short time they broke their promise and made the golden calf (Sifrei Devarim 320:6).

Verse 21

קנאוני means, they made My anger glow (cf. Rashi on v. 16).
בלא אל means, with something that is not a god.
בלא עם [I WILL MOVE THEM TO JEALOUSY] WITH THOSE WHO ARE NOT A PEOPLE — i.e. with a nation that has no reputation, as it states e.g. of the Chaldeans (Isaiah 23:13), "Behold, the land of the Chaldeans, this people was not; [the Assyrians founded it …]", and of Esau it states (Obadia 1:2) "Thou art greatly despicable".
בגוי נבל אכעיסם I WILL PROVOKE THEM TO ANGER WITH A DEBASED NATION — these are the "Minim", the heretics. So indeed, it states, (Psalms 14:1) "The heretic (נבל) hath said in his heart "There is no God" (Sifrei Devarim 320:10; Yevamot 63b).

Verse 22

קדחה means, IT BURNS.
ותיקד AND IT SHALL BLAZE in your midst to the very foundations (Rashi merely supplies the words "in your midst" and paraphrases עד שאול תחתית).
ותאכל ארץ ויבלה AND IT SHALL CONSUME THE LAND WITH HER INCREASE — i.e., your land and its produce (Rashi means that ארץ does not mean "the ground", "the soil").
ותלהט AND IT SHALL SET ON FIRE [THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE MOUNTAINS] — i.e. Jerusalem that is founded on the mountains, as it is said, (Psalms 125:2) "Jerusalem, mountains are round about it" (Sifrei Devarim 320:12).

Verse 23

אספה עלימו רעות — This means, I will join evil to evil, אספה having the same meaning as in (Isaiah 29:1) "add ye (ספו) year to year"; (Deuteronomy 29:18) "in order to add (ספות) the drunkenness to the thirst"; (Jeremiah 7:21) "Add (ספו) your burnt offerings to your sacrifices". — Another explanation of אספה: it means, "I will expend" (bring to an end so that there will be no more evils to bring upon them); similar to (Genesis 19:15) "lest thou be brought to an end (תספה).
חצי אכלה בם means all my arrows I will use to the full against them (i.e., there will be no arrows left). This curse according to the wording in which the punishment is expressed, implies a blessing: My arrows will come to an end, but they themselves will not come to an end (i.e. they will never be exterminated) (Sifrei Devarim 321:2; Sotah 9a).

Verse 24

מזי רעב — Onkelos rendered this by "swollen by famine". I have, however, no convincing proof for this meaning. In the name of R. Moses the Preacher of Toulouse have heard that it is the same as שעירי רעב, "hairy through hunger", for an emaciated person grows much hair on his flesh. In the Aramaic language the term for hair is מזיא, as e.g. in the phrase (Megillah 18a) "who was busying himself with his hair (במזיא)".
ולחמי רשף This means, the demons fight with them (לחם means "to battle"), — as it states, (Job. 5:7) "As the בני רשף fly upwards", and they are the demons (Berachot 5a).
וקטב מרירי means and the destruction caused by a demon whose name is מרירי. The word קטב denotes "cutting off", "destruction", as in (Hosea 13:14) "I will be thy destruction (קטבך) O grave".
ושן בהמת [I WILL SEND FORTH] THE TEETH OF CATTLE [UPON THEM] (i.e., even the teeth of cattle, not only of wild beasts) — It indeed happened once

that lambs bit people and caused their death (Sifrei Devarim 321:8; cf. Rashi on Leviticus 26:22).
חמת זחלי עפר THE FURY OF THOSE CRAWLING IN THE DUST — i.e. the poison of serpents that crawl on their bellies upon the ground as the water trickles (זחל) upon the ground. The root זחל properly denotes the passage of water upon the dust, and it is similarly used as here of the passage of anything that proceeds in a shuffling manner upon the ground.

Verse 25

מחוץ תשכל חרב WITHOUT, THE SWORD SHALL BEREAVE — This means, outside the city will the sword of the hostile troops bereave them,
ומחדרים אימה AND WITHIN, DREAD — when one flees and escapes, the recesses (חדרים) of his heart will vehemently beat out of dread, and he will gradually die through this (Sifrei Devarim 321:11). — Another explanation of ומחדרים אימה: In the house there will be the fear of pestilence, as it says, (Jeremiah 9:20) "For the death is come up into our windows" (cf. Bava Kamma 60b). So, too, did Onkelos translate it. — Another explanation of this verse: מחוץ תשכל חרב — the sword shall destroy them on account of what they have done in the streets (חוצה; the prefix מ denotes the cause: on account of the streets), as it is said, (Jeremiah 11:13) "According to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have you set up altars to the shameful thing" (Sifrei Devarim 321:12); ומחדרים אימה — on account of what they have done in the innermost chambers of their houses, as it is said, (Ezekiel 8:12) "[Have you seen] what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in his marbled chambers?" (Sifrei Devarim 321:12)

Verse 26

אמרתי אפאיהם means, I said in my heart, "I will אפאה them". One may explain אפאיהם to mean: I would make them as פאה, i.e. "as grain left in the corner of the field", to cast them away from Me as something free to all. We find a similar idea to this in Ezra (Nehemiah 9:22), "And thou gavest them kingdoms and nations and didst set them aside as a corner (פאה)" — i.e., as free to all. Thus (under this meaning) did Menachem ben Seruk classify it. Others expound it as the Targum does: My wrath (אף) will fall upon them. This is, however, not correct, for if it were so (i.e., if אפאיהם were connected with אף) it ought to have written אַאַפְּאֵיהֶם with two Alephs, the one as a servile letter (a prefix) and the other as a root letter, just as in (Isaiah 45:5) אאזרך, "I girded thee", and (Job 16:5) "I would strengthen you (אאמצכם) with my mouth" (in both these cases the first letter of the root is א as it is in אף), and the middle א (that after the פ) would not be proper to be in it at all. Onkelos, however (in connecting the word with אף, anger), rendered it according to the explanation of a Baraitha taught in Sifrei Devarim 322:1 which divides this word into three words, אמרתי אף אי הם, which means, I said in My anger (אף) I will make them as though they were not existent, i.e., that those who are looking for them would ask about them, "Where are they (אי הם)?".

Verse 27

לולי כעס אויב אגור WERE IT NOT THAT THE WRATH OF THE ENEMY WAS אגור — i.e. were it not that the wrath of the enemy were heaped up (אגור) against them to destroy them, and if he does overpower them and destroy them, he will attribute the greatness to himself and to his god, and he will not attribute it to Me. That is the meaning of what is stated immediately afterwords: פן ינכרו צרימו — i.e. lest they treat the matter as arising from a stranger (ינכרו) by attributing their power to a

stranger (נכרי) to whom the greatness, however, does not actually belong, פן יאמרו ידינו רמה וגו׳ LEST THEY SHOULD SAY, OUR HAND IS EXALTED etc.

Verse 28

כי FOR that nation גוי אבד עצות המה ואין בהם תבונה IS A NATION OF ERRING COUNSEL, NEITHER IS THERE ANY UNDERSTANDING IN THEM — for if they were wise (לו חכמו), ישכילו זאת THEY WOULD UNDERSTAND THIS viz., איכה ירדף וגו׳ HOW COULD ONE PURSUE [A THOUSAND] etc.

Verse 29

יבינו לאחריתם THEY WOULD CONSIDER THEIR LATTER END — i.e. they would set their heart to comprehend the ultimate reason for the misfortune of the Israelites,

Verse 30

איכה ירדף אחד HOW ONE MAN of the nations COULD PURSUE אלף A THOUSAND of the Israelites.
אם לא כי צורם מכרם EXCEPT THAT THEIR ROCK HAD DELIVERED THEM — sold them and delivered them into our hands, 'delivrer' in old French (Eng. = deliver).

Verse 31

כי לא כצורנו צורם FOR THEIR ROCK IS NOT AS OUR ROCK — all this the enemies should have understood, — that it is the Lord who delivered them (the Israelites) into their hands, and the victory is neither theirs nor their god's, for until now their gods could achieve nothing against our Rock, "for not as our Rock is their Rock". — The word צור wherever it occurs in Scripture is the equivalent of סלע, rock.
ואיבינו פלילים AND OUR ENEMIES ARE JUDGES — i.e. are now judges over us; it is evident therefore that our Rock must have delivered us over to them.

Verse 32

כי מגפן סדם גפנם FOR THEIR VINE IS OF THE VINE OF SODOM — This is to be connected with what is stated above, (v. 26, verses 27—31 being a parenthesis): "I said in My heart, I would scatter them into corners and make the remembrance of them cease…" because (כי) their doings are as the doings of Sodom and Gomorrah.
שדמת denotes fields of grain, as in (Habakkuk 3:17) "and the fields (שדמות) shall yield no corn"; (II Chronicles 23:4) "in the fields (בשדמות) of Kedron".
ענבי רוש [THEIR GRAPES ARE] GRAPES OF רוש — The word denotes a bitter herb.
אשכלת ממרת למו BITTER CLUSTERS SHALL BE THEIRS — i.e. a bitter drink is what they deserve: according to their actions should be their punishment. Onkelos also renders it thus: "the recompense of their actions shall be according to their bitterness".

Verse 33

חמת תנינם יינם THEIR WINE IS THE POISON OF DRAGONS — Understand this as the Targum does: הא כמרת תנינ׳א כס פורענותהון which means: Behold, like the gall of serpents is the cup of the drink of their punishment.

וראש פתנים AND AS THE VENOM OF VIPERS is their cup — venom, which proves cruel (אכזר) to him who is bitten. The sense is: a cruel enemy will come and exact punishment from them.

Verse 34

הלא הוא כמס עמדי IS NOT THIS LAID UP IN STORE WITH ME — Understand this as the Targum has it: ("Are not all their doings open before me?") — i.e., they believe that I have forgotten their doings, but really they are all stored up and kept with Me.
הלא הוא IS NOT THIS — the fruit of their vine and the produce of their fields (i.e. their doings) כמס עמדי STORED UP WITH ME?

Verse 35

לי נקם ושלם means, with Me is prepared and held in readiness the punishment of vengeance, and it will recompense them according to their doings. As regards the word ושלם, it means that vengeance will pay them their recompense (וְשָׁלַם is therefore a verb with the Vau conversive, the subject being the noun נקם which precedes it). — But some explain the word וְשָׁלַם as a noun, having the same meaning as שְׁלוּם "recompense", when it would be of the same grammatical form as the noun in the phrase (Jeremiah 5:13) "And the דְּבֵר is not in them", where it has the meaning of דִּבּוּר, "Divine utterance". And when will I recompense them?
לעת תמוט רגלם AT THE TIME WHEN THEIR FOOT SHALL TOTTER — i.e. when the merit of their ancestors upon which they are relying (which is, as it were, their foot, their support) will become exhausted.
כי קרוב יום אידם FOR THE DAY OF THEIR CALAMITY IS AT HAND — i.e. as soon as I shall desire to bring about the day of their calamity, it will be near at hand and held in readiness by Me — that I may bring it by any of the many agencies I have.
וחש עתדת למו means, AND THE THINGS THAT ARE TO COME (עתידות) UPON THEM WILL COME QUICKLY (חש).
וחש — The word חש has the same meaning as the verb in (Isaiah V. 19) "Let him make speed and hasten (יחישה)". — So far Moses exhorted them with words of reproof, so that this song should be witness against them, i.e., that when the punishment would come upon them they would know (acknowledge) that I told them about this from the very beginning. From here onwards he exhorted them with a statement of the comfort that would come upon them when their punishment would have ended; this being similar to all that is stated above (30:1—2) "And it shall come to pass when [all these things] are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, … then the Lord thy God will turn they captivity, etc."

Verse 36

כי ידין ה' עמו — This means, when He will sentence them to all these sufferings that are mentioned concerning them. The phrase has the same meaning as (Job 36:31) "For by them ידין nations", i.e. He will chastise the nations. — This word כי has not the meaning of "because", giving the reason for the preceding statements, but it is an expression (a particle) beginning a new a statement, as (Leviticus 25:2) "When (וכי) ye will come into the land" (cf. Rashi on that passage). The meaning is: When these judgment will come upon them, and the Lord will bethink Himself concerning His servants to have mercy on them again.
יתנחם HE WILL REPENT — This is an expression for changing one's mind whether for good or for evil.
כי יראה כי אזלת יד WHEN HE SEETH THAT THEIR POWER IS GOING ON — i.e. when He sees that the power of the enemies is constantly becoming exceedingly stronger over them,ואפס AND THERE IS NOT among them עצור ועזוב.

עצור is one who is saved by a עוצר (a "restrainer") and ruler who would restrain them,
עזוב means one saved by an עוזב. Now an עוצר is a ruler who keeps the people in check that they should not march in scattered groups when they go into war against the enemy, maintenue in old French, (Engl = maintainer). Consequently עצור (the passive) is one who is saved through the restraint of the ruler. עזוב is one who is strengthened, as (Nehemiah 3:8) "and they fortified (ויעזבו) Jerusalem unto the broad wall"; (Jer. 49:25) "How is this city of praise not helped (עזובה)!". In old French anforcede, (English = fortified).

Verse 37

ואמר AND HE, the Omnipresent, WILL SAY with regard to them אי אלהימו WHERE ARE THEIR GODS which they served.
צור חסיו בו THE ROCK IN WHOM THEY TRUSTED — i.e. the rock beneath which they sought shelter (more lit., with which they covered themselves) from the heat and the cold; that is to say, "in which they trusted" that it would protect them against evil.

Verse 38

אשר חלב זבחימו THE FAT OF WHOSE SACRIFICES THEY, i.e. these gods — used to eat, which they offered to them, and which used to drink יין נסיכם THE WINE OF THEIR DRINK OFFERING.
יהי עליכם סתרה LET IT BE YOUR PROTECTION — i.e., let that rock (v. 37) be a refuge and shelter to you.

Verse 39

ראו עתה SEE NOW — Realise now from the punishment which I have brought upon you and from which there was no one to save you, and, on the other hand, from the help which I will render you and there will be none who can prevent Me,
אני אני הוא [THAT] IT IS I, EVEN I — I am He Who have the power to abase (make low) and it is I who have the power to raise,
ואין אלהים עמדי AND THERE IS NO GOD WITH ME — i.e. standing against Me to prevent this.
עמדי means, who is my equal and like Me.
ואין מידי מציל AND THERE IS NONE WHO CAN DELIVER OUT OF MY HAND those who rebel against Me.

Verse 40

כי אשא אל שמים ידי FOR I SHALL LIFT UP MY HAND TO HEAVEN — This means; for in My wrath I shall lift up My hand to Myself in an oath.
ואמרתי חי אנכי — This is the expression of an oath: I SWEAR AS TRUE AS I LIVE [FOR EVER].

Verse 41

אם שנותי ברק חרבי means, IF I SHALL WHET THE BLADE OF MY SWORD, so that it shall have a flash (ברק); splendeur in old French
ותאחז במשפט ידי AND MY HAND TAKE HOLD ON JUDGMENT — i.e., on strict justice, relinquishing (i.e. withdrawing) My attribute of mercy from My enemies who have done so much evil unto you, — "I was angry only a little, but they helped to do harm" (Zechariah 1:15). — but My hand shall grasp the attribute of justice to hold fast to it in order to take vengeance.

אשיב נקם וגו׳ I WILL RENDER VENGEANCE [TO MY ADVERSARIES]. — Our Rabbis derived in the Agada from the wording of the text which states, "And My hand shall hold the משפט fast", that the nature of the Holy One, blessed be He, is not like the nature of human beings: The nature of a human being is that when he shoots an arrow he cannot bring it back (i.e., cannot check its flight); the Holy One, blessed be He, however, shoots His arrows and it is in His power to bring them back as though He is still holding them in hand, for, you see, lightning is His arrow, for it states here ברק חרבי, "Lightning is my weapon, and my hand holds fast to משפט" (Mekhilta). This משפט (i.e., משפט according to this explanation) has the meaning of punishment, in old French justicia, the execution of justice (the third definition given by Rashi on Exodus 28:15 of this word)

Verse 42

אשכיר חצי מדם I WILL MAKE MY ARROWS DRUNK WITH BLOOD of the enemy,
וחרבי תאכל AND MY SWORD SHALL DEVOUR their FLESH.
מדם חלל ושביה FROM THE BLOOD OF THE SLAIN AND THE CAPTIVE i.e., this will happen to them because of the sin of those slain in Israel (i.e., on account of their blood; מדם), and because of the captives they have made amongst them,
מראש פרעות אויב — because of the sin of even the very first (ראש) breach (פרעות) made by the enemy (פרעות = פרצות); because when the Holy One, blessed be He, exacts punishment from the heathen nations for the wrongs they have inflicted upon Israel, He visits on them their own sin and the sins of their ancestors, from the very first breach they have made in Israel (Sifrei Devarim 332:5).

Verse 43

הרנינו גוים עמו SING ALOUD, O YE NATIONS, OF HIS PEOPLE — At that time (when I shall take vengeance on them) the nations will praise Israel (Sifrei Devarim 333:2): "See, how praiseworthy is this people, — that they have cleaved to the Holy One, blessed be He, amidst all the troubles which have passed over them, and have not forsaken Him, for they had constantly experienced His goodness and His excellence".
כי דם עבדיו יקם FOR HE WILL AVENGE THE BLOOD OF HIS SERVANTS — i.e., the shedding of their blood, as the phrase usually implies.
ונקם ישיב לצריו AND HE WILL RENDER VENGEANCE TO HIS ADVERSARIES for their robbery and their violence, just as it is stated, (Joel 4:19) "Egypt shall be a desolation and Edom shall be a desolate wilderness, for the violence against the children of Judah …", and it states in another passage (Obadiah 10) "For the violence against thy brother Jacob [shame shall cover thee]" (cf. Sifrei Devarim 333:3).
וכפר אדמתו עמו means, and He will appease His land and His people for the miseries that have passed over them and for that which the enemy has caused them.
וכפר is an expression denoting appeasing and calming, as e.g. (Genesis 32:21) אכפרה פניו which is rendered in the Targum by "I will appease his anger" (cf. Rashi on that verse).
וכפר אדמתו AND HE WILL PROPITIATE HIS LAND — and what is His land? עמו HIS PEOPLE — when His people receives comfort His land, too, receives comfort, and so, too, it states, (Psalms 85:2) "Thou hast been favourable, O Lord, unto Thy land" — whereby hast Thou been favourable unto Thy land? The words that follow in the text give the answer: "Thou hast brought back the captivity of Jacob" (Thy people).
— In a different manner is it (the section from v. 26 onwards) expounded in Sifrei, and there is a difference of opinion regarding it between R. Judah and R. Nehemiah. R. Judah expounds the whole of it as having

reference to Israel, whilst R. Nehemiah refers the whole of it as referring to the other nations (Sifrei Devarim 327). R. Judah explains it as referring to Israel as follows: (26) אמרתי אפאיהם in the same manner as I have explained it, up to (27) ולא ה' פעל כל.(28) כי גוי אבד עצות המה זאת FOR THEY ARE A NATION LOSING COUNSEL, i.e., they have lost My Torah, which was a fitting counsel for them, ואין בהם תבונה AND THERE IS NO UNDERSTANDING IN THEM to consider,# (30) איכה ירדף אחד HOW ONE MAN of the nations COULD PURSUE אלף A THOUSAND of them, צורם מכרם אם לא כי EXCEPT THAT THEIR ROCK HAD DELIVERED THEM into their power.# (31) כי לא כצורנו צורם — all as I have explained, right up to the end. — R. Nehemiah expounds it as referring to the other nations as follows: (28) כי גוי אבד עצות המה — This he explains as I have explained it at first up to (31): ואיבינו פלילים
— (32) כי מגפן סדם גפנם FOR AS THE VINE OF SODOM IS THEIR VINE — i.e. the vine of the other nations.
ומשדמת עמרה AND OF THE FIELDS OF GOMORRAH etc., — and they do not set their mind to attribute the greatness to Me.
ענבמו ענבי רוש THEIR GRAPES ARE GRAPES OF GALL — This is what it stated above לולא כעס אויב אגור WERE IT NOT THAT THE ANGER OF THE ENEMY IS HEAPED UP against Israel to destroy them (cf. Rashi's explanation of אגור above) — so, too, here: "their grapes are grapes of gall", to make them (the Israelites) reel and to embitter their lives, and therefore אשכלות מרורת למו BITTER CLUSTERS ARE FOR THEM to make them swallow them for what they have done to My children.
(33) חמת תנינם יינם WINE OF DRAGONS IS THEIR WINE — i.e., the wine prepared to give them to drink for what they have done to them (יינם "their wine" is not the wine which they prepare, but that which is prepared for them).
(34) כמס עמדי IS IT NOT LAID WITH ME — "it" means that cup (which is implied in the word יינם, "the wine prepared for them"), as it states. (Psalms 75:9) "For in the hand of the Lord is a cup … [and the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall drink them]".
(35) לעת תמוט רגלם AT THE TIME THEIR FOOT (i.e., of the enemies) SHALL TOTTER — this is similar to what is said, (Isaiah 26:6) "The foot shall tread it down".
(36) כי ידין ה' עמו — In this explanation, in the phrase כי ידין the word כי is used in the meaning of "because" (not as in the former explanation where it means "when"), and ידין is not an expression for sufferings (the meaning it was given above) but it means as much as: For He (God) will plead their cause (take their parts) against the power of their oppressors, כי יראה כי אזלת יד וגו', when He sees that the hand of the enemy waxes mighty, etc.
(37) ואמר אי אלהימו AND HE SAYS WHERE IS THEIR GOD — i.e., when the enemy (cf. this with Rashi's previous explanation) will say, "Where is the God of Israel?" — even as Titus, the wicked, asked, when he pierced the curtain of the Holy of Holies (cf. Gittin 56b), just as it is said, (Micah 7:10) "Then my enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her who said unto Me, Where is the Lord, thy God?"
(39) ראו עתה כי אני וגו' means, then the Lord will display His saving power and will say, SEE NOW, THAT IT IS I, EVEN I — from Me came the evil upon them (the Israelites) and from Me will good come upon them.
ואין מידי מציל AND THERE IS NONE THAT CAN DELIVER OUT OF MY HAND — i.e. that can deliver you (the nations) from the evil which I shall now bring upon you.
(40) כי אשא אל שמים ידי — The first two words (continuing this exposition) are as much as כי נשאתי, "Because I have lifted up", and the text means: everlasting I made the heaven the dwelling-place of My Glory, — as the Targum takes it ("For I have established in heaven the place of My Divine Glory") — therefore there will surely be none that can deliver you, for even when the weak person is above and the strong below, the

fear of him that is above lies upon him that is below; how much more is this so when "I", the strong, am above and you, the weak, are below. — ידי means the place of My Divine Glory, as (Numbers 2:17) "every man by his place (ידו)", — therefore I had the power to punish you immediately, but I said that I shall live forever, therefore I need not hasten to exact punishment, because I have time for this matter: I live for ever and in later generations can punish them, for I have the power to exact punishment both from the living and the dead. A human king who is always going to die (may die at any moment), takes quick vengeance to punish during his lifetime, because either he or his enemy may die with the result that he would never exact his vengeance from him; but I live for ever, and if they (My enemies) should die and I shall not have exacted punishment from them during their lifetime, I can exact it when they are dead.
(41) אם שנותי ברק חרבי — There are many instances where the particle אם is not used conditionally (i.e., it does not signify "if"). Here, also: when I shall whet ברק חרבי MY GLITTERING SWORD AND MY HAND SHALL HOLD FAST ON JUSTICE, etc., etc., all as I have explained above.

Verse 44

הוא והושע בן נון HE AND HOSHEA THE SON OF NUN — It was the Sabbath of transmission of office (lit., "of two pairs" of judges): authority was taken from one and given to the other (Sotah 13b). Moses appointed a Meturgeman for Joshua that he (Joshua) should hold in public an Halachic discourse during his (Moses') lifetime in order that the Israelites should not say to him, "During your teacher's lifetime you did not dare to raise your head!" — And why does it (Scripture) here call him Hosea (since his name had long since been changed to that of Joshua — cf. Numbers 13:16)? In order to indicate that he did not become haughty, for although this dignity had been conferred upon him, he assumed a humble bearing as at the commencement of his career (cf. Sifrei Devarim 334:3).

Verse 45

Verse 46

שימו לבבכם SET YOUR HEARTS [UNTO ALL THE WORDS WHICH I TESTIFY AGAINST YOU THIS DAY] — Indeed, it is necessary for a man that his eyes, his heart and his ears, should all be attentively directed to the words of the Torah, for so it states, (Ezekiel 40:4) "Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart [upon all that I shall show thee]" (viz., the plan of the Temple). If in the case of the model of the Temple, which was being made visible to the eyes and was being measured by a rod, it was necessary for a man, according to Scripture, that his eyes, his ears and his heart be attentive, then in order to understand the words of the Torah which are like mountains suspended on a hair (i.e., numerous laws are derived from a single word of the Torah), how much the more is this necessary!

Verse 47

כי לא דבר רק הוא מכם FOR IT IS NOT A VAIN THING FOR YOU — it is not for nothing that you are to occupy yourselves laboriously with it. because much reward depends on it, כי הוא חייכם FOR IT IS YOUR LIFE (life is the reward). Another explanation: There is not one empty (ריק i.e., apparently superfluous) word in the Torah that, if you properly expound it, has not a grant of reward attached to it for doing so. You can know

this, for so did our Rabbis say: It states (Genesis 36:22) “And Lotan’s sister was Timna”; (Genesis 36:32) “and Timna was concubine [to Eliphaz, Esau’s son]”. Why is this stated? Because she (Timna) said, “If I am unworthy to become his (Elphaz's) wife, would that I would become his concubine!”. And why all this (why does Scripture enter into all these details of her birth and marriage; of what interest is it to us)? To tell you in what distinction Abraham was held — that rulers and kings (Lotan was one of the chieftains of Seir, cf. Genesis 36:20—21) were eager to connect themselves by marriage to his descendants (Sifrei Devarim 336:1; cf. Rashi on Genesis 36:12).

Verse 48

וידבר ה' אל משה בעצם היום הזה AND THE LORD SPAKE TO MOSES THAT SELF SAME DAY — In three places in Scripture the expression בעצם היום הזה is used. It states in the narrative of Noah (Genesis 7:12) בעצם היום הזה entered Noah … [into the ark]” — which means in the glare of full daylight. Because his contemporaries said: By this and by that we swear; (cf. Note 2 on Deuteronomy 1:1): If we notice him about to do so we will not let him enter the ark, and not only that, but we will take axes and hatchets and we will split the ark in pieces. Thereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, said, “See, I will let him enter at midday and anyone who has power to prevent it, let him come and prevent it!” Of Egypt, too, it states, (Exodus All. 11) “The selfsame day the Lord did bring [the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt]”: because the Egyptians said: By this and by that! If we notice them about to do so, we will not let them leave, and not only that, but we will take swords and other weapons and will kill them. Thereupon said the Holy One, blessed be He, “See, I will bring them forth in the middle of the day, and anyone who has power to prevent it, let him come and prevent it!” Here, too, regarding Moses’ death, it states בעצם היום הזה, because the children of Israel said, By this and by that! If we notice him about to ascend the mountain, we will not let him do so, — the man who brought us out of Egypt, and divided the Red Sea for us, and brought the Manna down for us, and brought a flight of quails for us, and made the “well” rise, and gave us the Torah: we will not permit him to go!” Thereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, said, “Behold, I will bring him unto his resting place in the middle of the day, etc.” (Sifrei Devarim 337; cf. Rashi on Genesis 17:23).

Verse 49

Verse 50

כאשר מת אהרן אחיך [AND DIE] … AS AARON THY BROTHER DIED — i.e., and die by that death which you witnessed and for which you longed. For Moses stripped Aaron (before the latter’s death) of his first (i.e., the upper) garment, similarly the second, and similarly the third, and attired Elazar with them, and thus he (Aaron) beheld his son in his new dignity. Moses then said to him, “Aaron, my brother, ascend the bier”, and he ascended; — “Stretch out your hand”, and he stretched it out; — “Stretch out your leg”, and he stretched it out; “Close your eyes”, and he closed them; — “Close your mouth”, and he closed it, and thus did he pass away! Thereupon Moses said, “Happy is he who will die a death like this!” (Sifrei Devarim 339:3; cf. Rashi on Numbers 20:26).

Verse 51

על אשר מעלתם בי BECAUSE YE TRESPASSED AGAINST ME — i.e., because you made the people to trespass against Me.
על אשר לא קדשתם אותי BECAUSE YE SANCTIFIED ME NOT — i.e. because you brought it about that I was not sanctified; I said to you, 'Speak to the rock!" They, however, smote it and had therefore to smite it twice. Had they, however, spoken to it, and it had given forth its water without being smitten, the Name of the Heaven would have been sanctified; for the Israelites would have said, "How is it with the rock which is subject neither to reward nor to punishment, for when it acts meritoriously it receives no reward and when it sins it is not punished? It fulfils so obediently the command of its Creator! — how much the more should we do so!"

Verse 52

כי מנגד means, BECAUSE FROM THE DISTANCE.
תראה וגו׳ YOU SHALL SEE [THE LAND] etc. — If you do not see it now, you will not see it at any time during your lifetime,
ושמה לא תבוא SINCE YOU SHALL NOT COME THERE — for I know that it is dear unto you, therefore I tell you (v. 49) "Ascend and see it!".

Chapter 33

Verse 1

וזאת הברכה … לפני מותו AND THIS IS THE BLESSING [WHEREWITH MOSES … BLESSED THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL] BEFORE HIS DEATH — i.e., quite near to his death. "For" said he, "if not now, when?" (Sifrei Devarim 342:7).

Verse 2

ויאמר ה' מסיני בא AND HE SAID, THE LORD CAME FROM SINAI — First he began with praise of the Omnipresent, and only afterwards did he begin with what concerned Israel; but in the praise of God with which he began there is also mention of Israel's merit. All this was by way of intercession, as though to say, "These are worthy that blessing should rest upon them" (Sifrei Devarim 343:1).
מסיני בא [THE LORD] CAME FROM SINAI — He went forth towards them when they were about to take their stand at the foot of the Mount, — as a bridegroom goes forth to welcome his bride, as it is said, (Exodus 19:17) "And Moses brought the people forth to meet God": this teaches us that He (God) was Himself going forth facing them (cf. Mekhilta and Rashi on the verse quoted).
וזרח משעיר למו AND HE SHONE FORTH FROM SEIR UNTO THEM (the Israelites), because He first addressed Himself to the sons of Esau (the inhabitants of Seir) that they should accept the Law, but they refused,
הופיע מהר פארן HE APPEARED FROM MOUNT PARAN, because He went there and addressed Himself to the sons of Ishmael (who dwelt in Paran, see Genesis 21:21) that they should accept it and they also refused (Sifrei Devarim 343:6; Avodah Zarah 2b),
ואתה AND HE CAME therefore to Israel,
מרבבת קדש — i.e. and with Him were a part of the myriads of the holy angels, and not all of them and not even the majority of them: not as is the way of a human being who displays all the splendour of his riches and magnificence on his marriage day (Sifrei Devarim 343:11).
אשדת (lit., "fire, Law", or "fire of Law") — i.e. the Law which had been written before Him from olden times in black fire upon white fire (Midrash Tanchuma, Bereshit 1). The meaning of the verse is: He gave to

them (למו) upon the Tablets the writing of His right hand (cf. Talmud Yerushalmi Shekalim 9:1). Another explanation of אש דת: Understand this as the Targum has it: a law which was given them from the midst of the fire (cf. Exodus 19:18).

Verse 3

אף חבב עמים YEA, HE LOVED THE PEOPLES — Also He loved the tribes with exceeding love. — Each individual tribe may be termed עם (or גוי), "a people", for, you see, Benjamin alone was yet to be born when the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Jacob, (Genesis 25:11, see Rashi thereon) "A nation and a congregation of nations shall be of you."
כל קדשיו בידך ALL HIS SAINTS ARE IN THY HAND — the souls of the righteous are stored up with Him, just as it is said, (I Samuel 25:29) "And the soul of my lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God" (Sifrei Devarim 344:7).
והם תכו לרגלך AND THEY SAT AT THY FOOT — And they are deserving of this, because they betook themselves right into the middle within the underpart of the mountain unto Thy foot at Sinai.
— The word תכו expresses the idea of "they were acted upon" (a passive) — "they placed themselves right in the middle (תוך) between Thy feet".
ישא מדברתיך EVERYONE RECEIVED THY WORDS — they bore upon themselves the yoke of the Law (Sifrei Devarim 344:3).
מדברתיך. The מ in it (in this word) has a close affinity to a root letter (i.e., it is an integral part of the noun and is not a prefix), as in (Numbers 7:89) "And he heard the voice uttering itself (מְדַבֵּר) unto him", and (Ezekiel 2:2) "And I heard Him that uttered Himself (מְדַבֵּר) unto me", which is the same as מִתְדַּבֵּר (see Rashi on Numbers 7:89). So, too, this word מדברתיך denotes: that which Thou didst speak unto Thyself to make it audible to me that I might tell them; tes pourparlers in old French, [English = thy utterances]. — Onkelos, however, translated it in the sense that they travelled in accordance with Thy words (only at Thy command), so that the מ in it is a servile letter (a prefix) used in the sense of מן. — Another explanation of this verse: אף חבב עמים, YEA, HE LOVED THE PEOPLES — even at the time of Thy love for the nations of the world — when You did show unto the nations a smiling (friendly) countenance and did deliver Israel into their power, even then כל קדשיו בידך ALL HIS SAINTS WERE IN THY HAND — all their righteous and pious people clung to You and did not depart from You and You did guard them (Bava Batra 8a),
והם תכו לרגלך and they betook themselves right into the midst of, and gathered beneath Thy shadow,
ישא מדברתיך they gladly accepted Thy decrees and Thy laws. And these were their words:

Verse 4

תורה THE LAW which צוה לנו משה MOSES COMMANDED US, מורשה is AN INHERITANCE to THE CONGREGATION OF JACOB: we have taken it and we will not abandon it.

Verse 5

ויהי AND HE WAS — i.e. the Holy One, blessed be He, was
בישרון מלך KING IN JESHURUN — constantly was the yoke of His sovereignty upon them at all times.
בהתאסף When there gathered the head (בהתאסף ראשי), i.e., the total number (the whole) of their assembly.
ראשי — The word ראשי has the same meaning as (Exodus 30:12) "When you take the count (רֹאשׁ) of the children of Israel". Consequently they are

worthy that I should bless them (and so I shall now begin the blessing: May Reuben live, etc.). — Another explanation of בהתאסף: When they assemble together in one band and there is peace between them, only then is He their King, but not when there is dissension among them (Sifrei Devarim 346:1).

Verse 6

יחי ראובן LET REUBEN LIVE, in this world,
ואל ימת AND LET HIM NOT DIE, in the world to come (Sifrei Devarim 347:1) : that the incident of Bilhah be not remembered unto him (Sifrei Devarim 347:3).
ויהי מתיו מספר lit., AND LET HIS MEN BE A NUMBER — let him be counted amongst the number of his other brothers. This is exactly similar to the idea that is expressed in the text, (Genesis 35:22) "[And Reuben went] and lay with Bilhah [his father's wife]" … "And the sons of Jacob were twelve", which suggests that he was not excluded from the number of Jacob's sons.

Verse 7

וזאת ליהודה AND THIS IS FOR JUDAH — He mentioned Judah immediately after Reuben because both of them made confession of the wrong that was theirs, as it is said, (Job 15:18-15:19) "Because wise men have told their sins … unto them alone [the land was given] and no stranger passed amidst them". Further our Rabbis explained that during the whole forty years that Israel was in the wilderness Judah's bones were moving about in his coffin because of the excommunication that he had invoked upon himself, as it is stated that he said "If I do not bring him unto thee … I shall be sinning against my father all days" (cf. Rashi thereon: "also in the world to come"). Moses said, "Who brought it about that Reuben confessed his sin?" Judah, etc. (Sotah 7b; Bava Kamma 92a).
שמע ה' קול יהודה HEAR, O LORD, THE VOICE OF JUDAH — Hear the prayer of Judah's descendants, David and Solomon, and of Asa because of the Ethiopians, of Jehoshaphat because of the Ammonites and of Hezekiah because of Sannecherib (cf. Sifrei Devarim 348:8),
ואל עמו תביאנו AND BRING HIM TO HIS PEOPLE in peace from battle;
ידיו רב לו LET HIS HANDS רב FOR HIM — let them successfully strive for him (רב) and avenge his wrongs,
ועזר מצריו תהיה AND BE THOU A HELP TO HIM FROM HIS ADVERSARIES — He here prayed for Jehoshaphat with regard to the battle at Ramoth Gilead, as it states, (II Chronicles 18:31) "And Jehoshaphat cried and the Lord helped him". — Another explanation of שמע ה' קול יהודה HEAR, O LORD, THE VOICE OF JUDAH — Here in Judah's blessings he alluded to Simeon (שמע) (i.e., Simeon's blessing was included in that of Judah). And indeed, when they divided the land of Israel amongst the tribes, Simeon took his portion from amongst Judah's lot, as it is said, (Joshua 19:9) "Out of the allotment of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon" (cf. Sifrei Devarim 348:5). {And why did he not assign to him (to Simeon) a separate blessing? Because he had something in his heart against him on account of what he had done at Shittim (Numbers 25:14). thus is it written in the Agada on the Psalms}.

Verse 8

וללוי אמר means AND OF LEVI HE SAID (not to Levi).
תמיך ואוריך THY THUMMIM AND URIM — He is addressing God (not Levi).
אשר נסיתו במסה WHOM THOU DIDST TRY WITH TRIALS — [Since this is said in praise of the Levites] we may gather from it that they did not murmur together with the other tribes.

תריבהו וגו׳ THOU DIDST STRIVE WITH HIM [AT THE WATERS OF MERIBAH] — Understand this as the Targum has it: ("Thou didst put him to the test"). — Another explanation of תריבהו על מי מריבה: Thou didst seek an occasion against him to come with a pretext, for if Moses said, "Hear now, ye rebels", what sin did Aaron and Miriam commit? (why were they not allowed to enter the land?) Sifrei Devarim 349:3).

Verse 9

האמר לאביו ולאמו לא ראיתיו WHO SAID TO HIS FATHER AND TO HIS MOTHER, I HAVE NOT SEEN HIM — When they sinned in the matter of the golden calf and I said, "Who is on the Lord's side, let him come to me" (Exodus 32:26), all the sons of Levi gathered themselves unto me, and I ordered them each to kill his mother's father, he being an ordinary Israelite, or his brother on the mother's side, or the son of his daughter whose husband was an ordinary Israelite, and thus did they do. — It is impossible to explain the term "his father" literally, and "his brothers" as being those on his father's side, and similarly to understand "his sons" literally, for really all these are Levites, and of the tribe of Levi no one sinned., as it is said, "[And there gathered unto me) all the tribe of Levi" (Sifrei Devarim 350:1, Yoma 66b).
כי שמרו אמרתך BECAUSE THEY KEPT THY WORD, viz., Thou shalt have no other gods,
ובריתך ינצרו AND THEY GUARDED THY COVENANT viz., the covenant of circumcision (Sifrei Bamidbar 67 on בהעלתך); For the [ordinary] Israelites who were born in the desert did not circumcise their sons, whereas the Levites were [not only] circumcised themselves, [but they] also circumcised their sons.

Verse 10

יורו משפטיך THEY MAY TEACH THY JUDGMENTS (the emphasis is to be placed on "they") — they alone are worthy of doing this (cf. Onkelos).
וכליל — means burnt-offering (which was entirely (כליל) burnt on the altar) (Sifrei Devarim 351:3).

Verse 11

מחץ מתנים קמיו means, smite those who rise up against him with a smiting of the loins, similar to the idea that is expressed, (Psalms 69:24) "Make their loins continually to totter". It was about those who contested the High priesthood that he spake thus. — Another explanation: He foresaw that Hasmon and his sons would in future war with the Greeks, and he therefore prayed for them, because they were few in number, viz., the twelve sons of Hasmon and Eleazar against several myriads of the enemy. On this account he prayed ברך ה׳ חילו ופעל ידיו תרצה BLESS, O LORD, HIS ARMY AND ACCEPT FAVOURABLY THE WORK OF HIS HANDS (cf. Genesis Rabbah 99:2; Midrash Tanchuma, Vayechi 14).
ומשנאיו מן יקומון (The first word is, like קמיו, the object of the verb מחץ) — i.e. smite those who rise up against him and those who hate him (משנאיו), that they shall have no recovery.

Verse 12

לבנימן אמר OF BENJAMIN HE SAID — Because the blessing given to Levi referred to the Temple service and that of Benjamin to the Temple being built in his territory he mentioned one after the other. He placed Joseph immediately after him (after Benjamin), for he too had a Sanctuary in his territory: the Tabernacle at Shiloh was erected in his territory, as it says, (Psalms 78:67) "And he rejected the Tabernacle of Joseph" (v. 60

speaks of God forsaking the Tabernacle of Shiloh, the two verses being parallel). Because the "Eternal House" (the Temple) was more endeared to God than the Tabernacle of Shiloh, therefore he mentions Benjamin before Joseph (although Joseph was the elder),
חפף עליו means, He covers him and protects him,
כל היום ALL THE DAY — i.e., forever. From the day that Jerusalem was chosen as the seat of the Temple, the Divine Glory has never dwelt at any other place.
ובין כתפיו שכן AND BETWEEN HIS SHOULDERS SHALL HE DWELL — On the highest spot of his (Benjamin's) land was the Temple built (cf. Sifrei Devarim 352:9), except that it was twenty-three cubits lower than En Etam (Yoma 31a), and originally indeed David's intention was to build it there, as it is stated in the Treatise "on the slaughter of the holy sacrifices" (Zevachim 54b): People said him (David), Let us place it a little lower, because it states, "and between his shoulders (which are lower than the head) shall he dwell" - and you have no finer part of an ox than his shoulders.

Verse 13

מברכת ה' ארצו BLESSED OF THE LORD BE HIS LAND — It is a fact that there was in the inheritance of all the tribes no land so full of every good thing as Joseph's land (Sifrei Devarim 353:1).
ממגד — this means dainties and sweet food.
ומתהום [BLESSED OF THE LORD BE HIS LAND] BY THE DEEP — for the deep ascended and moistened it from below (תחת). — You will find that in the case of each tribe Moses' blessing corresponded in some way with Jacob's blessing (cf. for instance this verse with Joseph's blessing in Genesis 49:25).

Verse 14

וממגד תבואת שמש AND BY THE PRECIOUS FRUITS BROUGHT FORTH BY THE SUN — for this land lay exposed to the sun and it therefore produced sweet fruit (Sifrei Devarim 353:3).
גרש ירחים [AND BY] THE PRECIOUS THINGS PUT THINGS FORTH BY THE MOON — there are some fruits which the moon brings to maturity, these are cucumbers and melons (Sifrei Devarim 353:3). — Another explanation of גרש ירחים: this refers to fruits which the earth puts out and produces from month to month (cf. Onkelos).

Verse 15

ומראש הררי קדם AND BY THE FIRST THINGS OF THE HILLS OF קדם (taken in the sense of: the hills priority) — the meaning is: and it is blessed through the earliest ripening of the fruits, because its hills are earliest (קדם, "prior") to bring their fruits to maturity. - Another explanation: this tells us that their creation (the creation of the hills in the territory of Joseph) was prior (קדם) to that of all other hills (Sifrei Devarim 353:4).
גבעות עולם [AND THROUGH THE PRECIOUS THINGS OF] THE EVERLASTING HILLS — i.e., of hills which everlastingly (עולם) produce fruit, and do not cease to do so through restraint of rain.

Verse 16

ורצון שכני סנה — the last two words are the equivalent of שוכן סנה (the י being the suffix that that sometimes appears in participles, for the most part in poetry). The-meaning is: And may his land further be blessed

through the favour (רצון) and satisfaction of the Holy One, blessed be He, who first revealed himself to me in the thorn-bush (סנה).
רצון means satisfaction and appeasement, and similar is the meaning wherever רצון occurs in scripture.
תבואתה LET IT COME — i.e. let this blessing come לראש יוסף ON JOSEPH'S HEAD.
נזיר אחיו means THE ONE WHO WAS SEPARATED FROM HIS BRETHREN through his being sold.

Verse 17

בכור שורו THE FIRSTBORN OF HIS OX — There is a usage of the word בכור that denotes greatness and sovereignty, as it is said, (Psalms 89:28) "I will also make him a בכור" (i.e., a man of rank), and similarly (Exodus 4:22) "My son, my firstborn (בכורי) is Israel". The text means: the king who will issue from him, and that is Joshua, whose strength will be mighty as that of an ox to subdue many kings,
הדר לו HONOUR TO HIM — i.e., honour is given unto him, as it is said, (Numbers 27:20) "And thou shalt give of thy honour (הודך, a synonym of הדר) unto him" (Joshua).
וקרני ראם קרניו AND HIS HORNS ARE THE HORNS OF A RE'EM — The ox — its strength is mighty but its horns are not beautiful, a Re'em, however — its horns are beautiful but its strength is not mighty: therefore it ascribes to Joshua the strength of an ox and the beauty of a Re'em's horns (Sifrei Devarim 353:10).
אפסי ארץ [NATIONS] OF THE ENDS OF THE EARTH — The thirty-one kings whom Joshua conquered — is it possible that they were all of the land of Israel? But there was no king or ruler who did not acquire for himself a palace and territory in the land of Israel because it was so estimable to all of them (Sifrei Devarim 353:12), as it is said of Palestine, (Jeremiah 3:19) "An inheritance, the desire of hosts of nations" (see Rashi on this verse).
והם רבבות אפרים AND THEY ARE THE MYRIADS OF EPHRAIM — i.e., those who are gored are the myriads whom Joshua, who was descended from Ephraim, slew.
והם אלפי מנשה AND THEY ARE THE THOUSANDS OF MANASSEH — they are the thousands whom Gideon, who was descended from Manasseh, slew of Midian, as it is said, (Judges 8:10) "And Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor [and their hosts with them, about fifteen thousand men, all that were left … for there had fallen a hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword]".

Verse 18

ולזבולן אמר AND OF ZEBULUN HE SAID — These five tribes whom he blessed last, Zebulun, Gad, Dan, Naphtali and Asher, it repeats their names in order to instil them with strength and power, because they were the weakest of all the tribes. They are the very same whom Joseph took to Pharaoh, as it is said, (Genesis 47:2, cf. Rashi thereon) "And of the least of his brothers he took five men [and placed them before Pharaoh]" — because these looked weak, so that he (Pharaoh) should not appoint them his war officers (Bava Kamma 92a).
שמח זבולן בצאתך ויששכר באהליך REJOICE, ZEBULUN. IN THY GOING OUT, AND, ISSACHAR, IN THY TENTS — Zebulun and Issachar entered into a partnership: Zebulun dwelt at the harbour of ships and went out in ships to trade; he made profit and used to provide food for Issachar who sat at home and occupied themselves with the Torah. Consequently he mentioned Zebulun before Issachar (although the latter was the elder) because Issachar's knowledge of Torah was due to Zebulun (Genesis Rabbah 99:9).
שמח זבולן בצאתך REJOICE, ZEBULUN, IN THY GOING FORTH — Be successful when thou goest out to trade,

וישׂשכר AND ISSACHAR, be successful when you sit in your tents (באהליך) to study the Torah — to sit in the Sanhedrin and to intercalate the years and to fix the day of New Moon, as it is said, (I Chronicles 12:33) "And of the children of Issachar, men that had understanding of the times, … the heads of them were two hundred": as the heads of the Sanhedrin they used to busy themselves with this (Genesis Rabbah 72:5), and in accordance with their fixing of the seasons and their calculation of intercalary years,

Verse 19

עמים THE PEOPLES of the tribes of Israel,
הר יקראו THEY CALL TO THE MOUNTAIN, i.e., they assembled at Mount Moriah on the Festivals; — it speaks of calling them there because every assembly was (took place) in general by means of a summons to it — and שם THERE יזבחו THEY SACRIFICED on the Festivals, זבחי צדק SACRIFICES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.
כי שפע ימים יינקו FOR OF ABUNDANCE OF THE SEAS SHALL THEY — Issachar and Zebulun — SUCK, and they will consequently have leisure to busy themselves with the study of the Torah.
ושפני טמוני חול means, covered things that are hidden in the sand — the Tarith (a kind of fish; Rashi in his comment on the Talmudical passage afterwards quoted states that it is the tuna fish), the Chalazon (from which purple dye was obtained) and while glass (all valuable articles of commerce) which come out of the sea and the sand. This was in the territory of Issachar and Zebulun, as it is stated in Treatise Megillah 6a: The Scriptural text (Judges 5:18) is to be explained as follows: "Zebulun was a people that cursed his soul even unto death" because that "Naphtali was on the high places of the field", i.e., Zebulun complained about his territory, saying, To my brother (Naphtali) you have given fields and vineyards (while to me you have given hilly and mountainous land; to my brother you have given land while to me you have given seas and rivers! God replied. "All your brethren will be in need of you", as it states, "And the treasures hidden in the sand", which the Talmud goes on to explain are the marine creatures Rashi mentions above, deriving each of them from the words of the text, For they shall suck … of the concealed treasures of the sea).
ושפני has the meaning of "covering", as it is said (1 Kings 6:9) "And he covered (ויספן) the house"; (Jeremiah 22:14) וספן בארז, which the Targum renders by: "And it was covered with panels of cedar". — Another explanation of עמים הר יקראו THEY CALL THE PEOPLES TO THE MOUNTAIN — Through Zebulun's trading, merchants of the world's nations will come to his land, he living at the coast, and they will say, "Since we have taken so much trouble to reach here, let us go to Jerusalem and see what is the God of this people and what are His doings". When they behold all Israel serving one God and eating one kind of food (only that which is permissible to them), they are astonished because as regards the other nations, the god of one is not as the god of another, and the food of one is not as the food of another, so that they will say, "There is no nation as worthy as this", and they will therefore become proselytes to Judaism there, as it is said, "There shall they sacrifice sacrifices of righteousness" (Sifrei Devarim 354:5).
כי שפע ימים יינקו FOR OF THE ABUNDANCE OF THE SEAS SHALL THEY SUCK — "they" means Zebulun and Issachar; for the sea will give them wealth in abundance.

Verse 20

ברוך מרחיב גד BLESSED BE HE THAT ENLARGES GAD — this teaches us that Gad's territory extended far eastward (Sifrei Devarim 355:2).

שכן כלביא HE DWELLETH AS A LIONESS — Because he was near the border it therefore compares him to lions, for all who are near the border must be strong (that they may repulse attacks from neighbours) (Sifrei Devarim 355:3).
וטרף זרוע אף קדקד TEARING THE ARM WITH THE CROWN OF THE HEAD — Those whom they slew could be easily recognised, because they used to cut off the head together with the arm at one blow.

Verse 21

וירא ראשית לו AND HE SAW THE FIRST PART FOR HIMSELF — i.e. he saw good to take for himself territory in the land of Sihon and Og, the subjugation of which was the beginning (ראשית) of the conquest of the Land,
כי שם חלקת BECAUSE THERE WAS THE PORTION — i.e., because he knew that there in his territory was the portion of the field where was the grave of the מחוקק, THE LAWGIVER, viz., Moses,
ספון HIDDEN — i.e. that field was hidden and concealed from every creature, as it is said (Deuteronomy 34:6) "And no man knows his burial place" (Sifrei Devarim 355:6).
ויתא AND HE CAME — i.e. Gad came.
ראשי עם AT THE HEAD OF THE PEOPLE — They (the men of Gad) marched before the armed men at the conquest of the Land, because they were mighty, and thus does it state that Joshua said to them, (Joshua 1:14) "Ye shall pass armed before your brethren, etc.".
עשה צדקת ה' HE DID THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LORD — because they proved true to their word and kept their promise to cross the Jordan and to remain there until they (the Israelites) had conquered it and divided it amongst the tribes. — Another explanation: ויתא AND HE — the Lawgiver, Moses — CAME ראשי עם AT THE HEAD OF THE PEOPLE, עשה צדקת ה' HE DID THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE LORD — This, too, is spoken of Moses (cf. Sifrei Devarim 355:9).

Verse 22

דן גור אריה DAN IS A LION'S CUB — He, too, lived close to the border, and therefore it compares him to a lion (Sifrei Devarim 355:12).
יזנק מן הבשן HE SHALL LEAP FROM BASHAN — Understand this as the Targum has it: ("His land drinks of the rivers that flow from Bashan") — for the Jordan issued from his territory (ירדן = ירד דן, "It comes down from Dan") — from the cave of Pameas that is identical with Leshem which is in the territory of Dan (cf. Bekhorot 55a), as it is said, (Joshua 19:47) "And they called Leshem, Dan", but its spurting (זנוק) and gushing forth (the source of the river) was from Bashan. — Another explanation is: Just as a gush of water issues from one place and divides itself afterwards into two directions, similarly the tribe of Dan took a portion in two places: first they took in the northwest, Ekron and its adjoining parts, and this did not suffice them, so they came and fought against Leshem, which is Pameas. and is in the north-east, — because the Jordan issued from the cave of Pameas which is in the east of the land of Israel and goes from north to south and ends at the extremity of the Salt Sea which is in the east of Judah who took his territory in the southern part of the Land of Israel, as is set forth in the Book of Joshua, and that is the meaning of what is said, (Joshua 19:47) "And the border of the children of Dan went forth from them; for the children of Dan went up and fought against Leshem … [and possessed it and dwelt therein]", i.e., their border went forth from all that direction in which they first took their inheritance (Sifrei Devarim 355:13).

Verse 23

שבע רצון [NAPHTALI IS] SATISFIED WITH DESIRE — it means that his land was full of everything that its inhabitants could desire.
ים ודרום ירשה POSSESS THOU THE WEST (lit., the sea) AND THE SOUTH — The sea of Kinneret fell to his portion and he received on its south a ropes length of fishing-coast for spreading out his nets and meshes (Bava Kamma 81:2; cf. Sifrei Devarim 355:17).
ירשה — This word it a form of the imperative, as is the verb in (Deuteronomy 1:21), "Go up and take possession (שָׁרַ)". The accent that is penultimate, on the ר, proves this. Just as in the case of the ordinary imperative forms of the verbs, שמע ,לקח ,ידע ,סלח, when one adds a ה at the end the accent will be penultimate, viz.,,שמעה ,לקחה ,ידעה ,סלחה, here also ירשה is an imperative form. In the Massora Magna we find it included in an alphabetical register of imperative forms the accent of which is on the penultima (next to the last syllable).

Verse 24

ברוך מבנים אשר LET ASHER BE BLESSED AMONG SONS (or, "on account of sons") — I have found in the Sifrei Devarim 355:19 the following: You will find none of the tribes who was so blessed with children as Asher, but I do not know how this was so.
יהי רצוי אחיו LET HIM BE ACCEPTED OF HIS BRETHREN — and this was so for he pleased (רצה) his brother-tribes with oil of unripe olives (used for anointing the body) and fine fruits, and they paid him (רצה) with grain. — Another explanation of יהי רצוי אחיו HE WILL BE ACCEPTABLE TO HIS BRETHREN — because his daughters were beautiful (and were much sought in marriage), and this is what is stated in Chronicles (1 Chronicles 7:31) ["The sons of Asher … Malchiel] who was the father of ברזית", which is explained to mean: that his daughters were married to High Priests and Kings who were anointed with olive oil (זית) (Genesis Rabbah 71:10; cf. Rashi on this verse).
וטבל בשמן רגלו AND LET HIM DIP HIS FOOT IN OIL — it means that his land flowed with oil as a fountain: once it happened that the people of Laodicia were in need of oil; they appointed an agent (to purchase a large quantity and were able to do so only at a city of Asher; see Rashi on Genesis 49:20), as it is related in Menachot 85b.

Verse 25

ברזל ונחשת מנעלך THY LOCKS SHALL BE IRON AND COPPER — He is now addressing all Israel: This prophecy was fulfilled because their mighty men used to dwell in the border cities and, as it were, locked it (the country) so that the enemy should not be able to invade it, as though it were closely shut by locks and bars of iron and copper. Another explanation of ברזל ונחשת מנעלך: your land is locked in (surrounded) by mountains from which iron and copper is hewn, and the country of Asher was the "lock" of the Land of Israel (Sifrei Devarim 355:25).
וכימיך דבאך AND AS THY DAYS SO SHALL BE דבאך — i.e. and as the days that are thy best, — that is, the days of thy beginning, the days of thy youth, so shall be the days of thy old age, which דואבים, i.e. which flow away and decline (דבאך therefore means: the period of thy decline). Another explanation of וכימיך דבאך: as the number of thy days — all the days when thou didst perform the will of the Omnipresent, — shall be דבאך, thy flowing, i.e., referring to the fact that all countries will make gold and silver flow into the land of Israel, because it will be blessed with fruits, and all countries will take their supply of fruit from it and will, in payment, pour into it their silver and gold; askorant in old French: thus their silver and gold will come to an end, because they will pour it into your land (Sifrei Devarim 355:26).

Verse 26

אין כאל ישרון THERE IS NONE LIKE GOD, O JESHURUN — Know, O Israel, that there is none like God among all the gods of the peoples, and that their rock is not as your Rock.
רכב שמים — The meaning is: A RIDER UPON THE HEAVEN is the God who is your help, ובגאותו שחקים AND IN HIS MAJESTY he rides UPON THE SKIES.

Verse 27

מענה אלהי קדם A DWELLING PLACE FOR THE ANCIENT GOD (This must be connected with the preceding): — The skies serve as a dwelling place for the ancient God, i.e. the God Who pre-existed (קדם) all gods, for He selected the skies as His residence and dwelling place, ומתחת AND BENEATH His dwelling place, all the mighty men (men of strong arm, זרוע) dwell.
זרעת עולם THE ARMS OF THE WORLD are men such as Sihon and Og and the kings of Canaan who were the strength and might of the world. Therefore, since they are beneath God's dwelling place, in spite of themselves they must tremble and quake, and their power prove frail in His presence, for always the fear of the one above falls upon him below, so that He, being above, to Whom therefore belong strength and power, is thy help.
ויגרש מפניך אויב AND HE DROVE OUT THE ENEMY FROM BEFORE YOU, ויאמר AND HE SAID to you השמד DESTROY them!
מענה — Every word that requires ל at its beginning, [Scripture] places (may place) a ה at its end instead (Yevamot 13b).

Verse 28

בטח בדד [THEREFORE ISRAEL DWELT] IN SAFETY, ALONE — This means, every individual dwelling "each under his vine and under his fig-tree" (בטח; cf. 1 Kings 5:5 where the words Rashi quotes are preceded by לבטח), separated one from another (בדד, "alone"), because after the enemy was driven out, as stated in the preceding verse, they had no need to come together and to dwell in company on account of the enemy.
עין יעקב — The word עין has the same meaning here as in (Numbers 11:7) "And its appearance (עינו) was as the appearance (עין) of crystal" (i.e., the word עין is used as a term of comparison, "as", "like"). The meaning is: And Israel dwelt alone like the blessing with which Jacob blessed them (cf. Targum); not like the בדד which Jeremiah used, (Jeremiah 15:17), viz., "I sat alone (בדד) [because of thy hand, for thou hast filled me with Thy indignation]", but like the assurance which Jacob gave them, (Genesis 48:20) "And God shall be with you, and bring you back to the land of your fathers" (cf. Sifrei Devarim 356:6).
ירעפו means THEY WILL DRIP.
אף שמיו ירעפו טל ALSO HIS HEAVENS SHALL DRIP DEW — Also Isaac's blessing will be added to Jacob's blessing: "And God shall give thee of the dew of heaven, etc." (Genesis 27:28) (cf. Sifrei Devarim 356:7).

Verse 29

אשריך ישראל HAPPY ART THOU, O ISRAEL — After he had recited unto them all these blessings in detail, he said to them. "Why should I detail everything to you? Everything is yours.
מי כמוך … אשריך HAPPY ART THOU … WHO IS LIKE UNTO THEE! Thy help is in God (נושע בה׳), Who is מגן עזרך THE SHIELD OF THY HELP and חרב גאותך THE SWORD OF THY EXCELLENCY;
ויכחשו איביך לך AND THY ENEMIES SHALL DENY THEMSELVES AS SUCH UNTO THEE, e.g., the Gibeonites who said, (Joshua 9:9) "Thy servants have come from a far land, etc."

ואתה על במותימו תדרך AND THOU SHALT TREAD UPON THEIR HIGH PLACES, just as it is said, (Joshua 10:24) "Put your feet upon the necks of these kings" (cf. Onkelos).

Chapter 34

Verse 1

מערבת מואב אל הר נבו [AND MOSES WENT UP] FROM THE PLAINS OF MOAB TO MOUNT NEBO — There were several levels leading from the plain to the summit, but Moses covered them in one step (Sotah 13b).
את כל הארץ [AND THE LORD SHOWED HIM] ALL THE LAND — He showed him all the land of Israel in its prosperity and the oppressors who in future time would oppress it (Sifrei Devarim 357:4).
עד דן UNTO DAN — He showed him the children of Dan practicing idolatry, as it is said, (Judges 18:30) "And the sons of Dan erected the graven image for themselves"; and He showed him also Samson who would in the future issue from him (Dan) as a savior (Sifrei Devarim 357:7).

Verse 2

ואת כל נפתלי AND ALL NAPHTALI — He showed him his land both in its prosperity and in its ruin; and He showed him also Deborah and Barak of kadesh-Naphtali warring with Sisera and his armies (Sifrei Devarim 357:8-9).
ואת ארץ אפרים ומנשה AND THE LAND OF EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH — He showed him their land in its prosperity and in its ruin; and He showed him also Joshua who descended from Ephraim warring with the kings of Canaan, and Gideon who descended from Manasseh warring with Midian and Amalek (Sifrei Devarim 357:10-13).
ואת כל ארץ יהודה AND ALL THE LAND OF JUDAH, in its prosperity and in its ruin; and He showed him also the kings of the house of David and their victories (Sifrei Devarim 357:15-16).
ועד הים האחרון UNTO THE UTTERMOST SEA — i.e., the west country, in its prosperity and its ruin. — Another explanation: Read this as though it did not state הים האחרון but היום האחרון [UNTO] THE LAST DAY — The Holy One, blessed be He, showed him all that would in future happen to Israel unto the last day when the dead will again live (Sifrei Devarim 357:18).

Verse 3

ואת הנגב means THE SOUTH COUNTRY. — Another explanation is, that it refers to the cave of Machpelah (which was in the Negeb), as it is said, (Numbers 13:22) "And they went up to the south country, and came to Hebron" (where this cave was situated) (Sifrei Devarim 357:20).
ואת הככר AND THE PLAIN — He showed him Solomon casting the vessels of the Temple, as it is said, (1 Kings 7:46) "In the plain (ככר) of the Jordan did the king cast them in the thick clay" (Sifrei Devarim 357:21).

Verse 4

לאמר לזרעך אתננה הראיתיך TO SAY, TO THY SEED WILL I GIVE IT, I HAVE LET THEE SEE IT, i.e. in order that you may go and say to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob: The oath which the Holy One, blessed be He, swore to you — that oath He has fulfilled. This is the force of לאמר (Berakhot 18b), "to say it", viz., that you may say it — for that reason have I let you see it. But it is a decree from Me that שמה לא תעבר THERE YOU SHALL NOT CROSS OVER; for were this not so, I would keep you alive even until you saw

them planted and settled in it, and you would then go and tell them (the patriarchs).

Verse 5

וימת שם משה AND MOSES DIED THERE — Is it possible that Moses, died, and then wrote: "And Moses died there"? But, thus far did Moses write, from here and onward Joshua wrote. Rabbi Meir said: But is it possible that the Book of the Torah would be lacking anything at all, and yet it would state before the account of Moses' death was written in it, (Deuteronomy 31:26) "Take this book of the Torah" -? Rather the Holy One, blessed be He, dictated this, and Moses wrote it in tears (Sifrei Devarim 357:28; Bava Batra 15a, Menachot 30a).
על פי ה׳ BY THE COMMAND (lit., MOUTH) OF THE LORD — by the Divine kiss (Moed Katan 28a; cf. Rashi on Numbers 20:1).

Verse 6

ויקבר אותו AND HE BURIED HIM — i.e. The Holy One, blessed be He, in His glory, buried him (Sotah 14a). R. Ishmael, however, said, It means: "He buried himself". This (the word אותו) is one of the three cases of את with a pronominal suffix which R. Ishmael explained thus (as being reflexive and not accusative pronouns). Similar to it is: (Numbers 6:13; see Rashi thereon) "On the day when his naziritehood is fulfilled, he shall bring אותו", i.e. he shall bring (present) himself. Similar to it is, (Leviticus 22:16) "And they will burden אותם with iniquity of trespass". But did others burden them (the priests) with that iniquity? But the meaning is that they burdened themselves (Sifrei Bamidbar 32).
מול בית פעור OPPOSITE BETH PEOR — His grave was prepared there ever since the six days of Creation, to atone for the incident regarding Peor (see Numbers 25) (Sotah 14a). This (Moses' grave) was one of the things that were created "between the twilights" on the eve of the Sabbath [in the week of the Creation] (Pirkei Avot 5:6; Pesachim 54a).

Verse 7

לא כהתה עינו HIS EYE WAS NOT DIM — even after he had died (Sifrei Devarim 357:34).
ולא נס לחו means, nor did the life-sap that was in him depart (Sifrei Devarim 357:35): decomposition had no power over him (had no effect on his body), and the appearance of his face had not changed.

Verse 8

בני ישראל THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL [WEPT] — i.e., the men; but regarding Aaron, — because he pursued peace, and made peace between a man and his fellow, and between a woman and her husband, it is stated, (Numbers 20:29) "The whole house of Israel [wept for him]" — the men and the women (Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 17).

Verse 9

Verse 10

אשר ידעו ה׳ פנים אל פנים WHOM THE LORD KNEW FACE TO FACE — this means: that he was familiar with Him and used to speak with Him at any time he desired, just as it is stated that Moses said, (Exodus 32:30), "And now I

will ascend to the Lord”; (Numbers 9:8) “Stay and I will hear what God will command regarding you”.

Verse 11

Verse 12

ולכל היד החזקה AND IN ALL THAT STRONG HAND — this refers to the fact that he received the Torah that was on the Tablets, in his hands.
ולכל המורא הגדול AND IN ALL THAT GREAT TERRIBLENESS — the miracles and mighty deeds that were wrought in the great and terrible wilderness (cf. (Sifrei Devarim 357:45).
לעיני כל ישראל [WHICH MOSES SHOWED] BEFORE THE EYES OF ALL ISRAEL — This refers to the fact that his heart inspired him to shatter the Tablets before their eyes, as it is said, (Deuteronomy 9:17) “And I broke them before your eyes” (Sifrei Devarim 357:45), and the opinion of the Holy One, blessed be He, regarding this action agreed with his opinion, as it is stated that God said of the Tablets, (Exodus 34:1) אשר שברת "Which you have broken", [which implies] "May your strength be fitting (יישר; an expression of thanks and congratulation) because you have broken them" (Yevamot 62a; Shabbat 87a).